宗像教授伝奇考

【第六集】

むなかたきょうじゅでんきこう

星野之宣
Hoshino Yukinobu

潮漫画文庫

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【第六集】
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学生の時、宗像教授が"小町"と呼んでいた
まばゆいほどの美貌と才知の恩師・高群真智は、
小野小町研究の本を教授に残して逝った。
葬儀の後、教授は真智と夢うつつの邂逅をする。
そのなかで、30年前の彼女の突然の失踪と
陰惨な老いた小野小町伝説の真実が
教授の胸の内に見えてくる。

〈夢と知りせば〉より

❖星野之宣❖

一九五四年一月二十九日、北海道帯広市に生まれる。愛知県立芸大中退。
一九七五年「鋼鉄のクイーン」でデビューし、同年「はるかなる朝」で手塚賞受賞。
以来、宇宙、海洋、伝奇、SF等、スケールの大きい本格派SF漫画家として活躍。
徹底した取材と科学的知識に基づく、卓抜なアイディア、壮大で緻密なストーリー、
繊細なペンタッチが多くの読者をひきつけている。
代表作に、「妖女伝説」「2001夜物語」「ヤマタイカ」「ブルーホール」
「未来の二つの顔」「メガクロス」「宗像教授伝奇考」など多数。

BOOK DESIGN❖TAKAHASHI JUNZI

既刊大好評発売中!!

❖星野之宣の本❖

◉希望コミックス
「宗像教授伝奇考」1〜6集・特別版
◉潮漫画文庫
「ヤマタイカ」全5巻

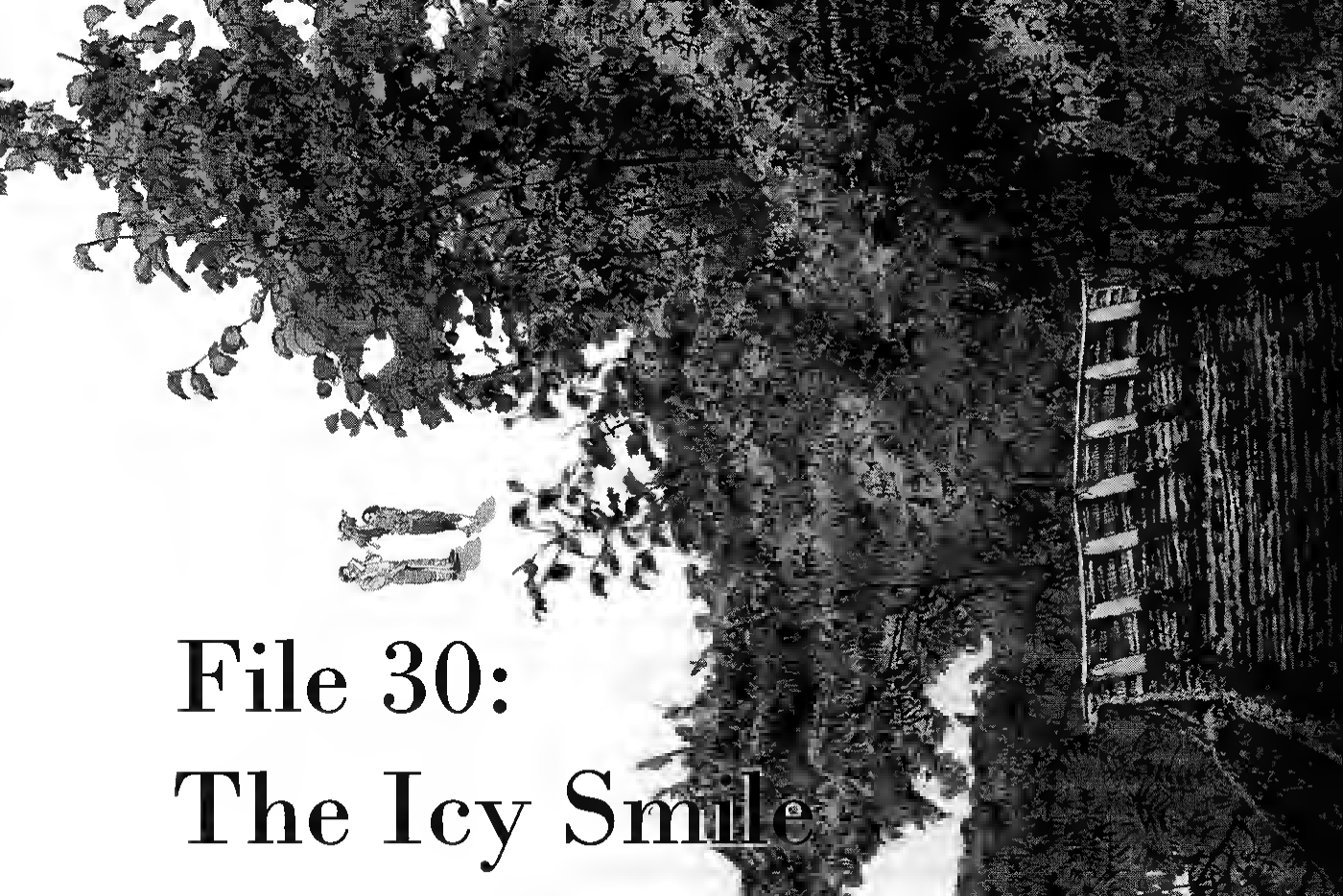
THE LEGENDARY MUSINGS OF PROFESSOR MUNAKATA

VOLUME 6

HOSHINO YUKINOBU

Table of Contents

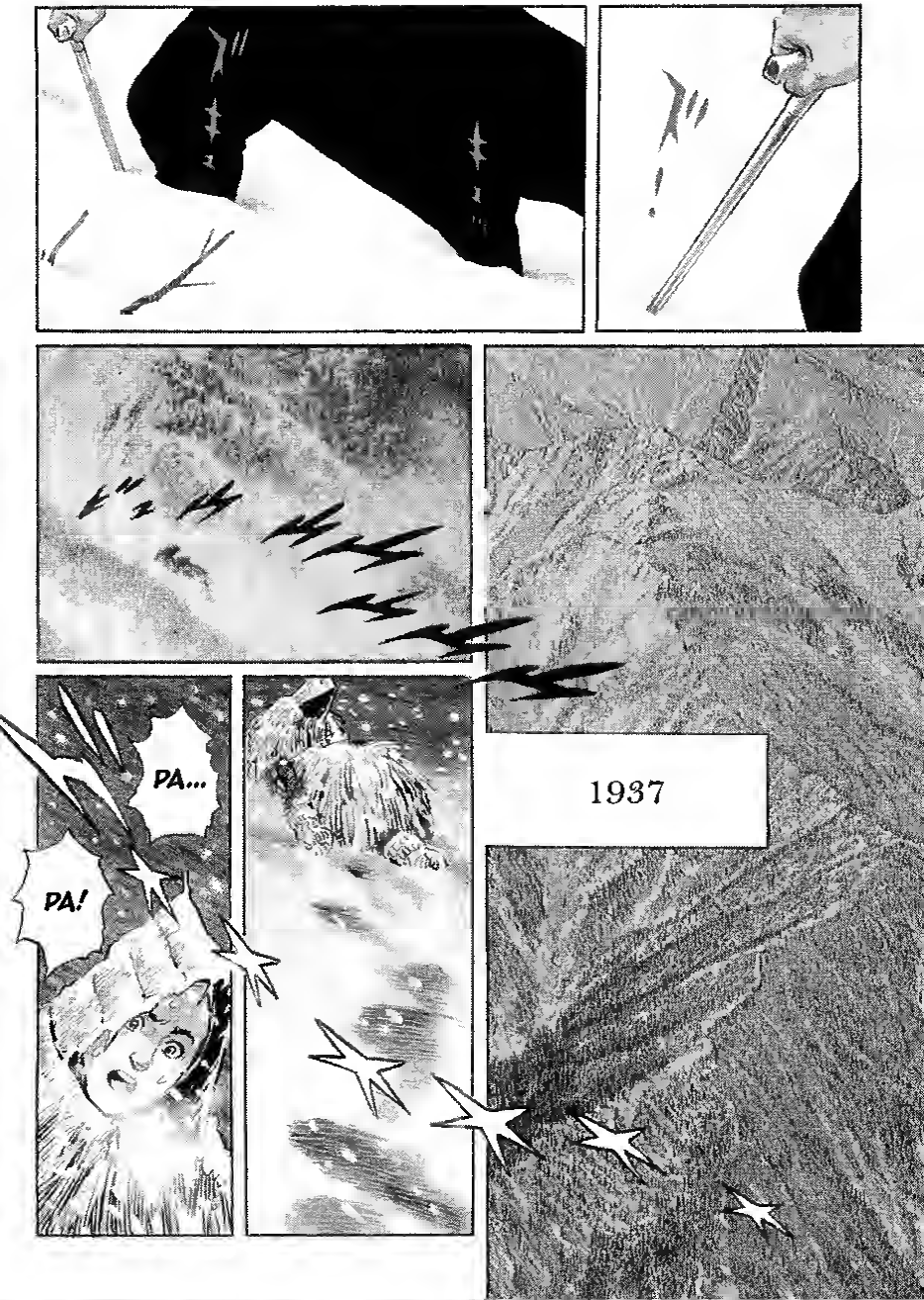
File 30: The Icy Smile — 5
File 31: The Momotaro Connection — 45
File 32: Had I Known I Was Dreaming — 85
File 33: The Meteor Sword: Part One — 125
File 34: The Meteor Sword: Part Two — 165
File 35: The Meteor Sword: Part Three — 205
— 246

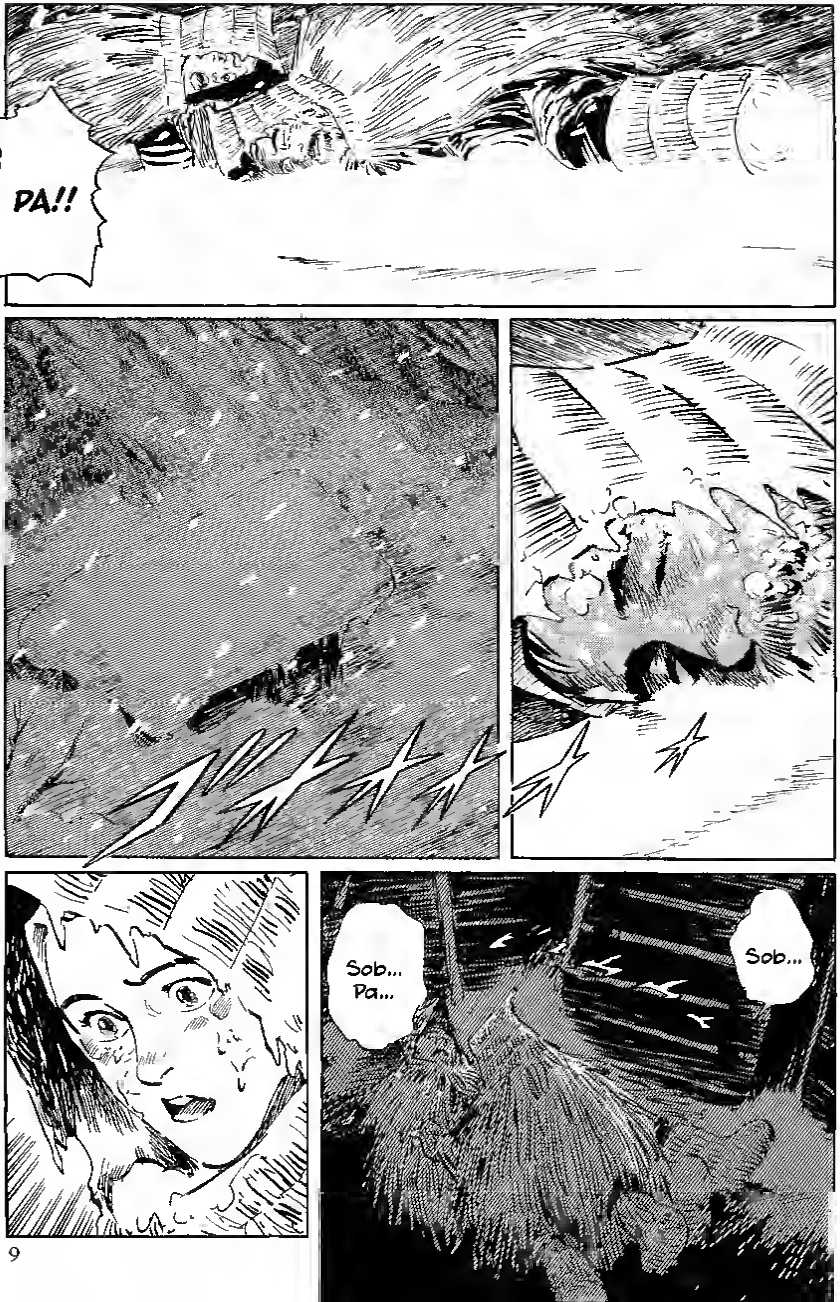


File 30:
The Icy Smile

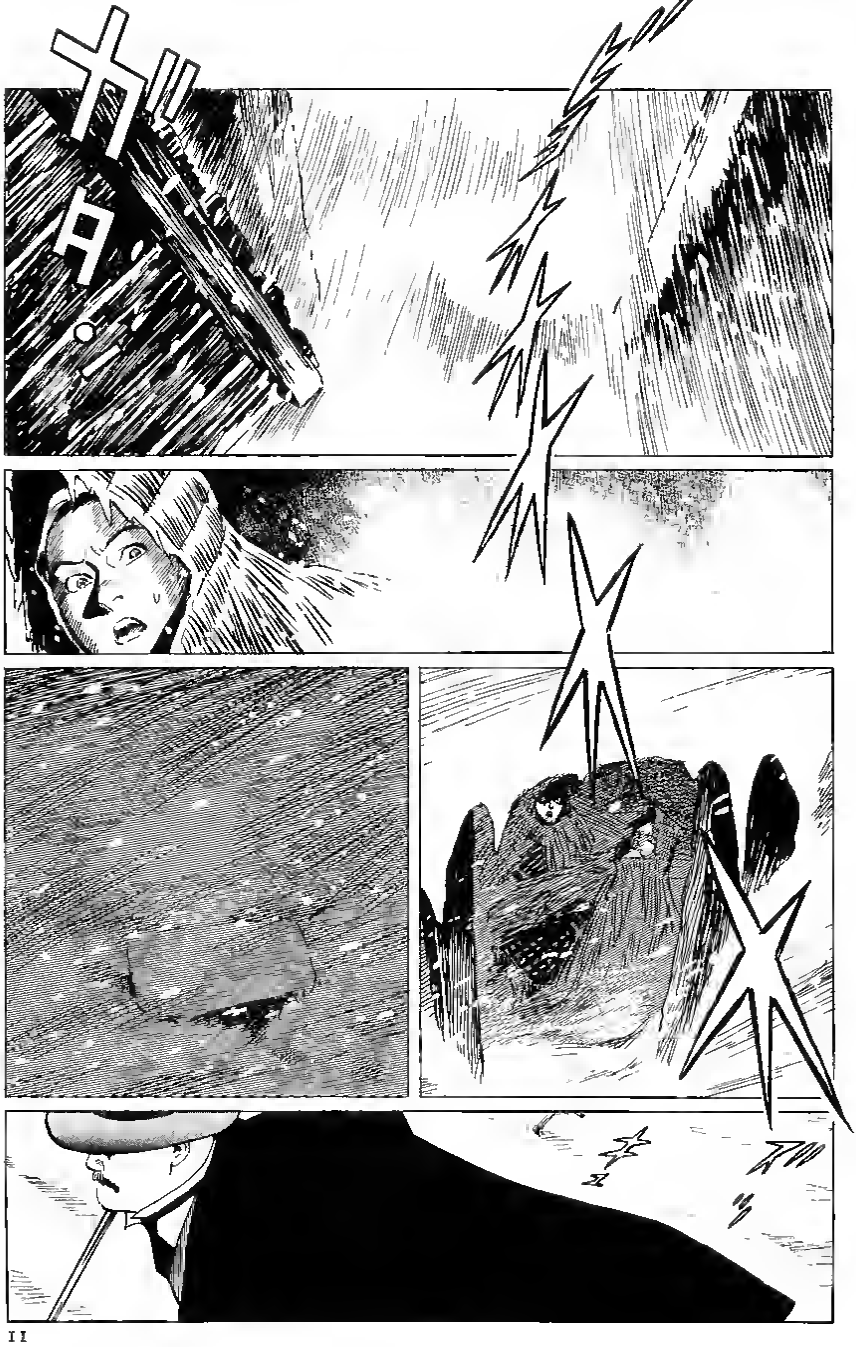
Come over here, Yojihei...
Ha ha!
Yojihei...
Yojihei...

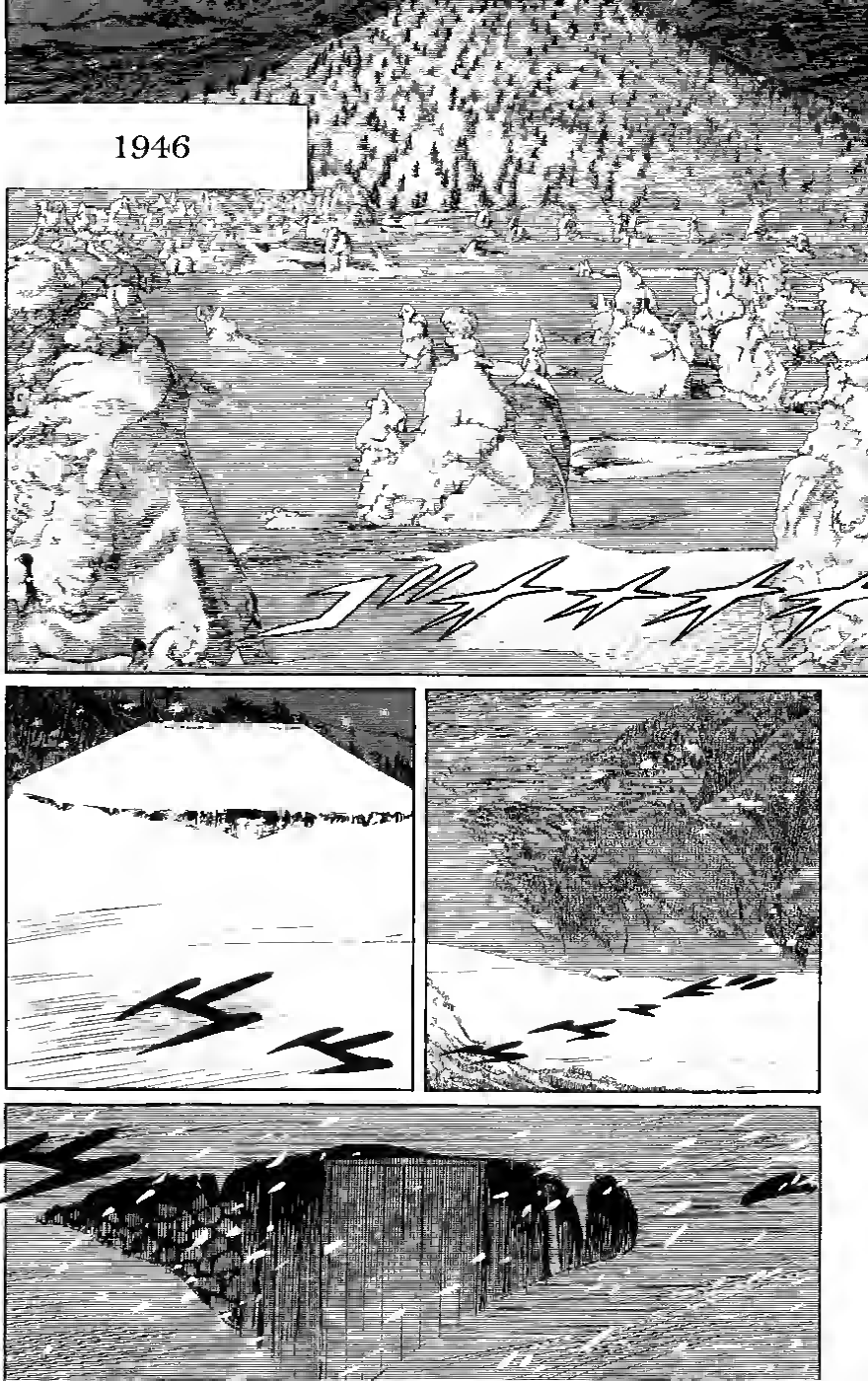
Okay!
Go on and play, Yojihei.
Just take good care of yourself. You'll be better in no time...
You'll need to be quarantined in a sanatorium, otherwise it'll infect your son...
It's consumption (tuberculosis)...
Yojihei...
Near Shiramori Village, Kamikita District, Aomori Prefecture
1930


PA...
PA!
1937

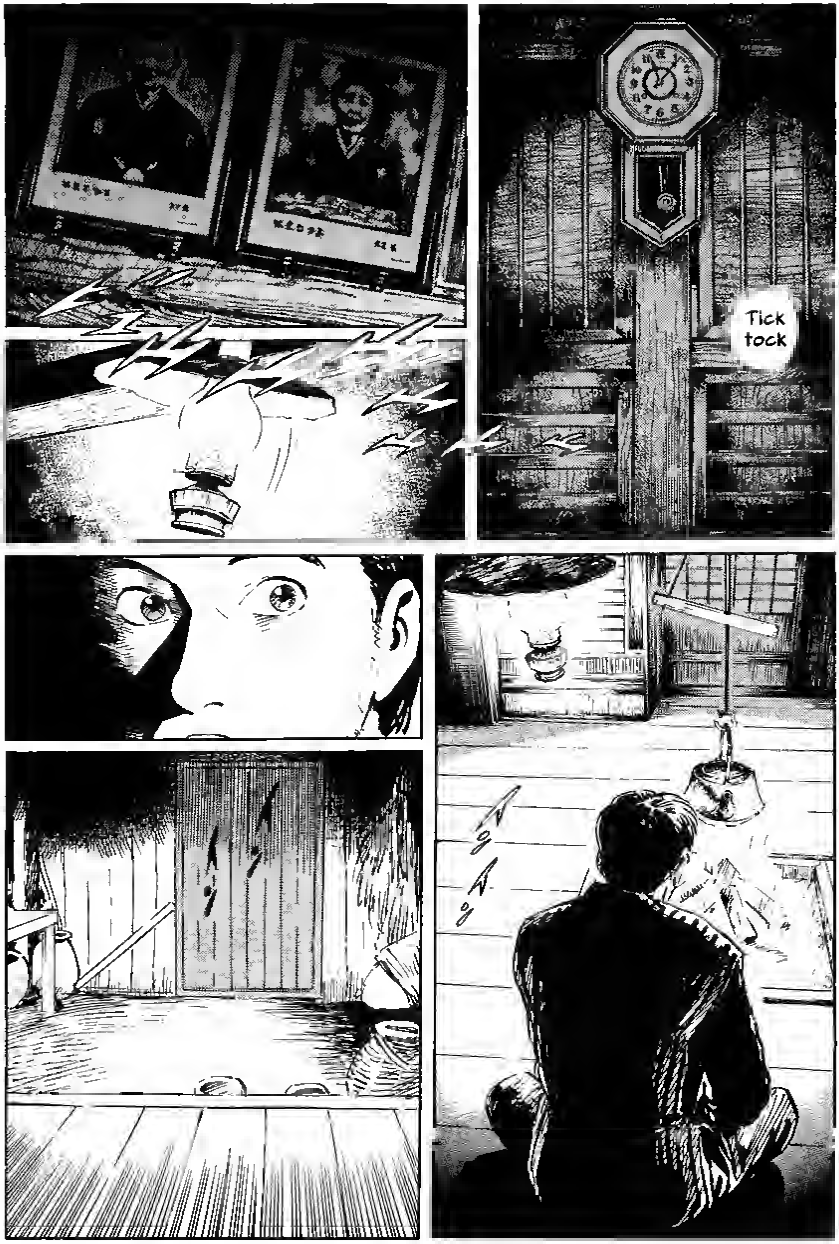

PA!!
Sob...
Pa...
Sob...

BUT HE SHOULD BE DEAD...!!
B...




1946

ガタタ
ゴーッ
ガタタ
ゴーッ
ヒュー
ヒュー


Tick
tock

ハァ
ナニ
ガ

W... What do I do? And who could she be?
There ain't anyone around for miles...

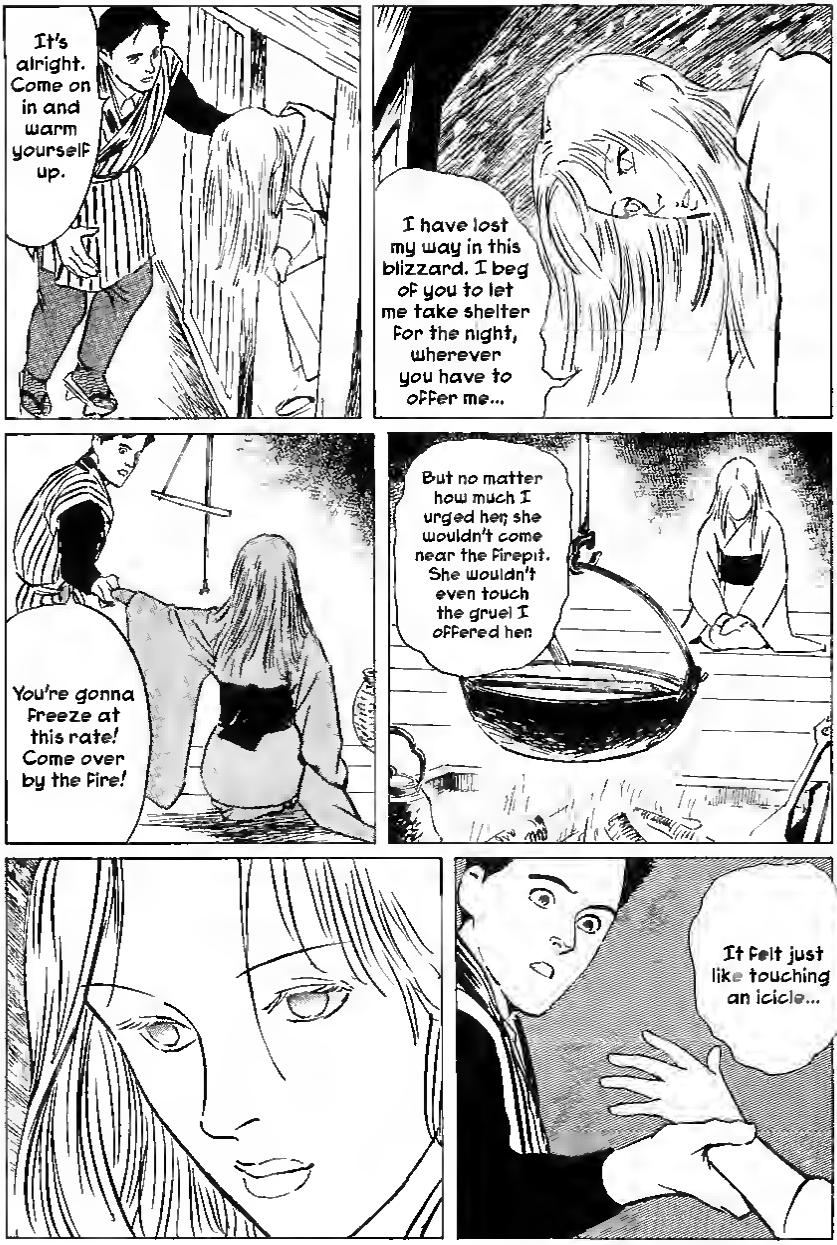
I need more firewood! I gotta keep the fire burning and keep her warm!
...She sure is pretty. I never seen a face like that before. Where could she come from...?
ヒュオオオ
ドゴ

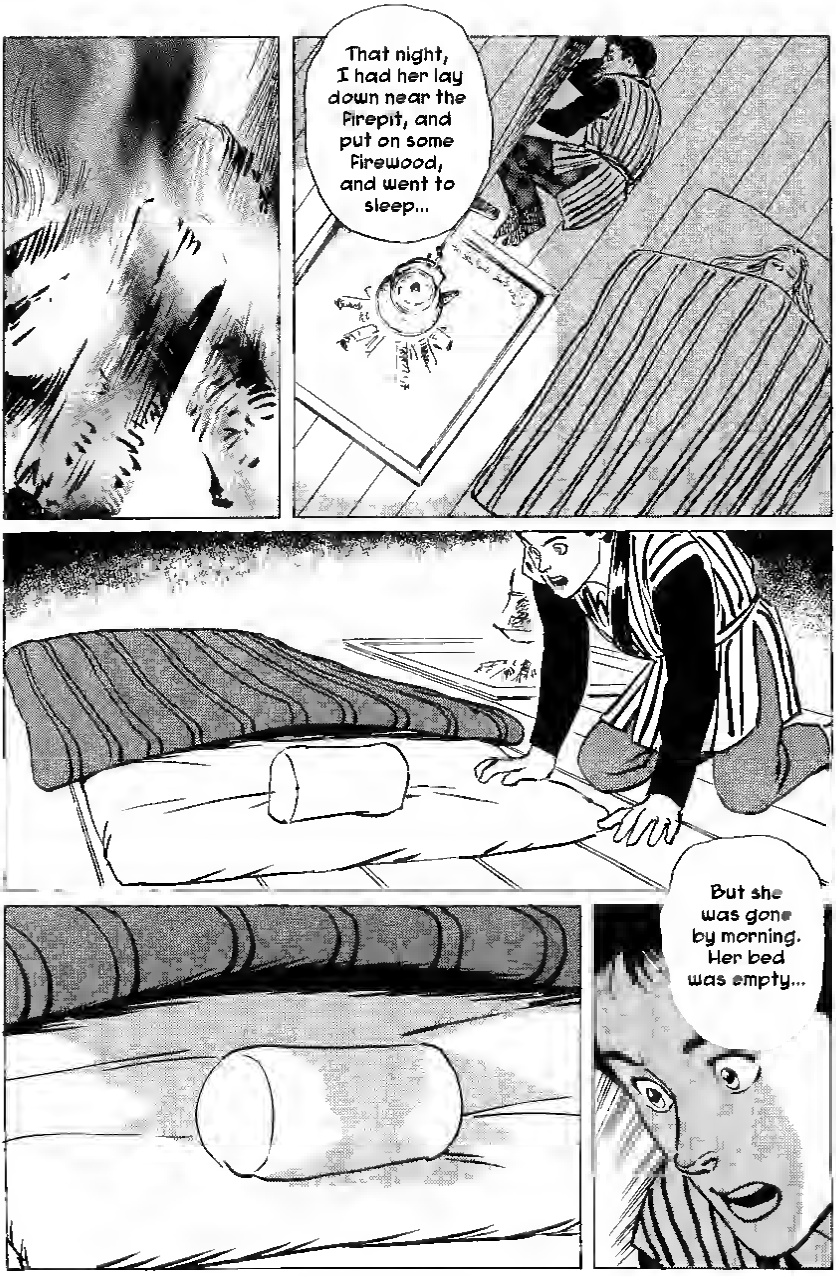
ガッ
……

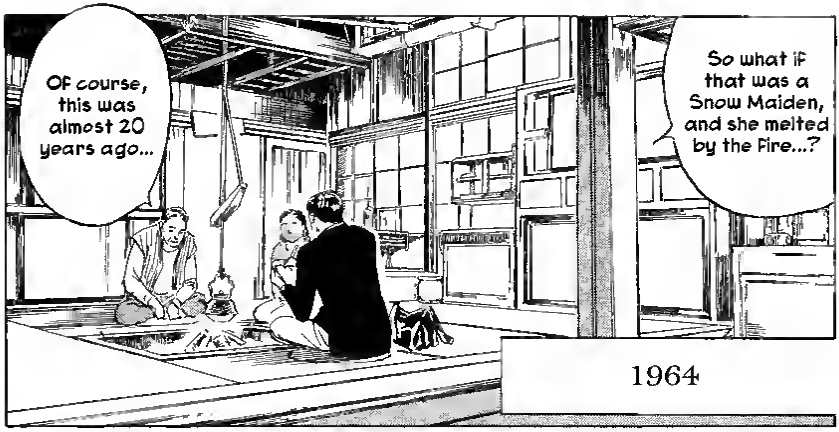
Yojihei, I really do feel sorry for you. Your ma died of tuberculosis, and your pa died in the mountains... I can understand you're lonely
Hah hahhah! You're makin' stuff up again!
I ain't lying! She really vanished!
Then you won't have that dream no more! Hahhahhah!
日本村米出所
It just ain't good for you to be living in the middle of nowhere. You just need to find yourself a wife

クックー

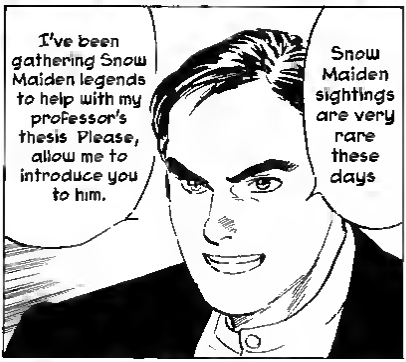
どどおおおお
It was a night of a thundering blizzard. Just as I was thinking about going to sleep ..
とんとん
Who could it be at this hour...?
どおおおおお

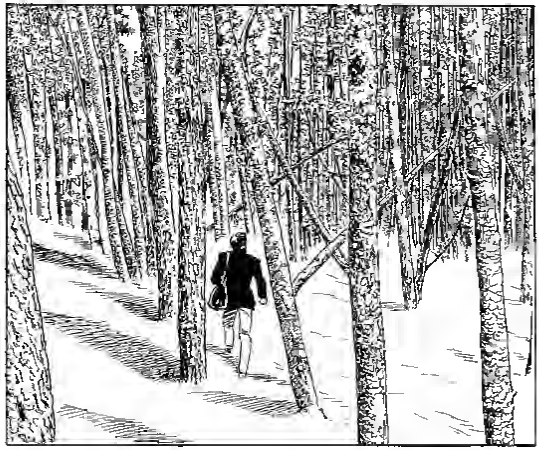

It's alright. Come on in and warm yourself up.
I have lost my way in this blizzard. I beg of you to let me take shelter for the night, wherever you have to offer me...
You're gonna freeze at this rate! Come over by the fire!
But no matter how much I urged her, she wouldn't come near the firepit. She wouldn't even touch the gruel I offered her.
It felt just like touching an icicle...

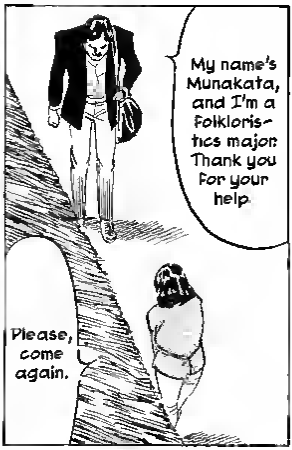

That night, I had her lay down near the firepit, and put on some firewood, and went to sleep...
But she was gone by morning. Her bed was empty...

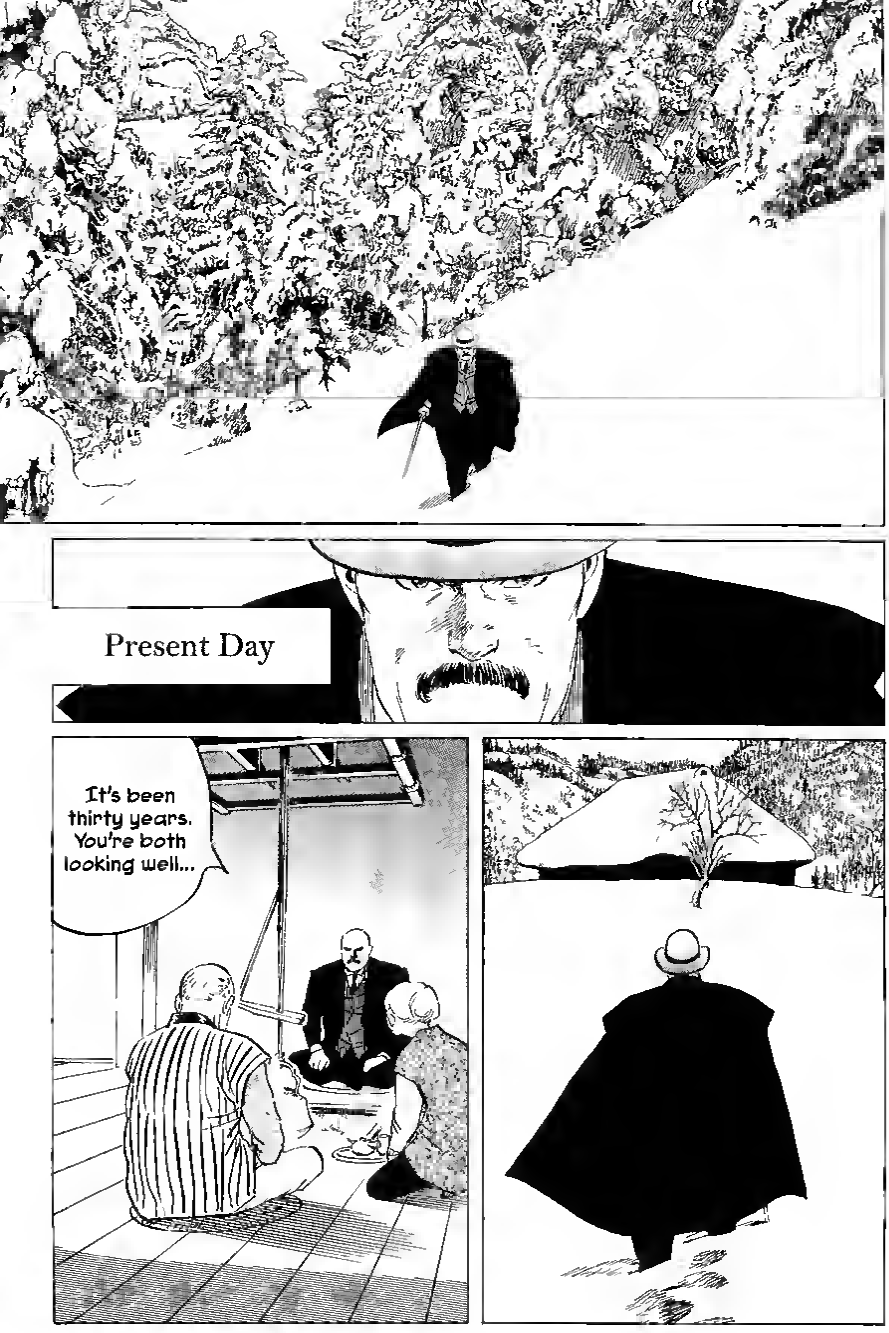

Of course, this was almost 20 years ago...
So what if that was a Snow Maiden, and she melted by the fire...?
1964

.....
What's this? You want to make a thesis out of my husband's dream?


I've been gathering Snow Maiden legends to help with my professor's thesis. Please, allow me to introduce you to him.
Snow Maiden sightings are very rare these days

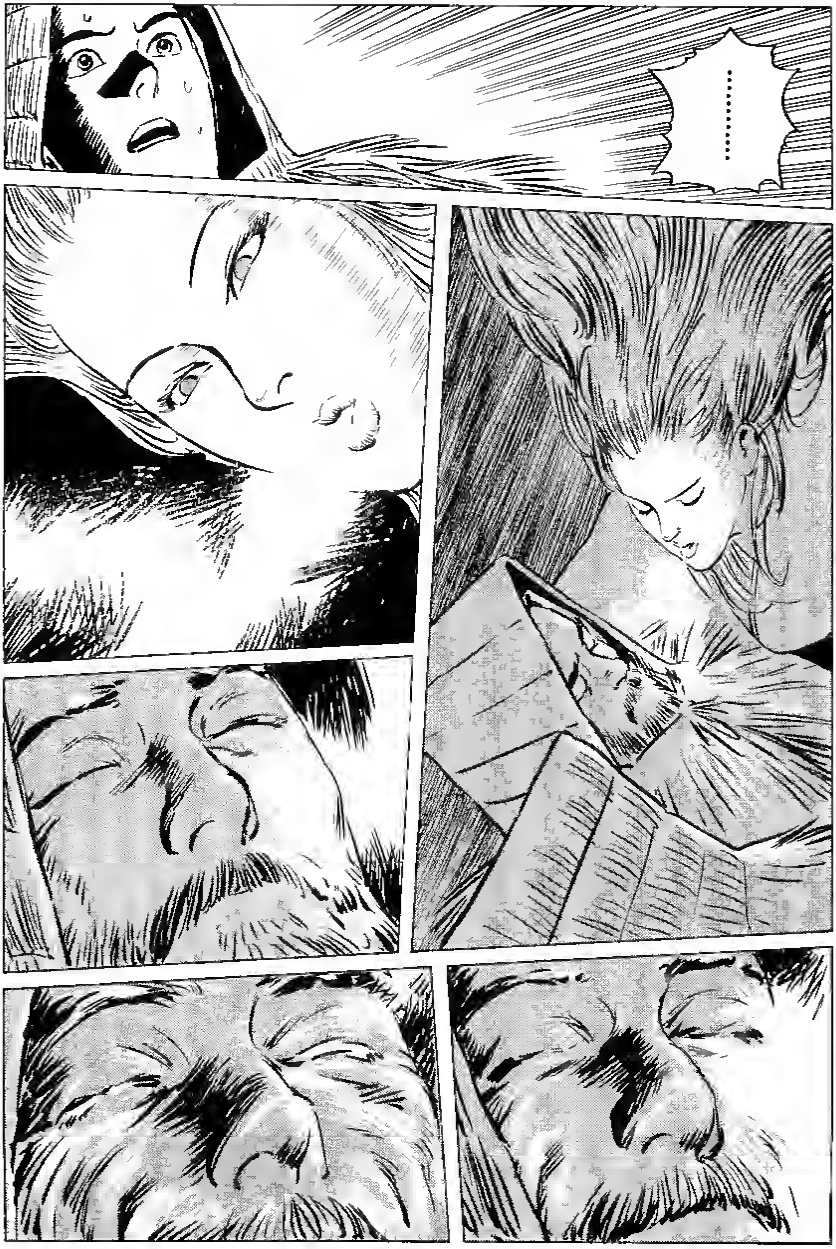



My name's Munakata, and I'm a folkloristics major. Thank you for your help.
Please, come again.


Present Day
It's been thirty years. You're both looking well...

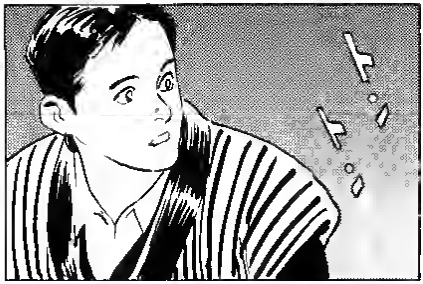
You remember, the one that listened to your Snow Maiden story... Did you forget about that?
Oh, you're that student...
I actually wanted to hear Yojihei's Snow Maiden story again.
Can I ask you to tell it to me once more?
He sometimes barely even remembers my face Hohhohho!
Oh, well I don't blame him
Well, it's about fifty years ago now...

ゴオオオ
We couldn't even tell right from left. My pa had carried a heavy load on our way there, and he collapsed of exhaustion.
ヒュオオ
My pa and I had finished our business in Towada and were on our way home when a blizzard hit..
We finally managed to stumble upon a hut with a charcoal grill, but the wind was only getting stronger, and we were getting colder...



PA...!!
Tell no one. If you speak the truth to anyone, I will kill you, too!
.....

The next winter, snow fell much earlier, and it was so cold it felt like the fire in my house burnt out...
I was all alone.
.....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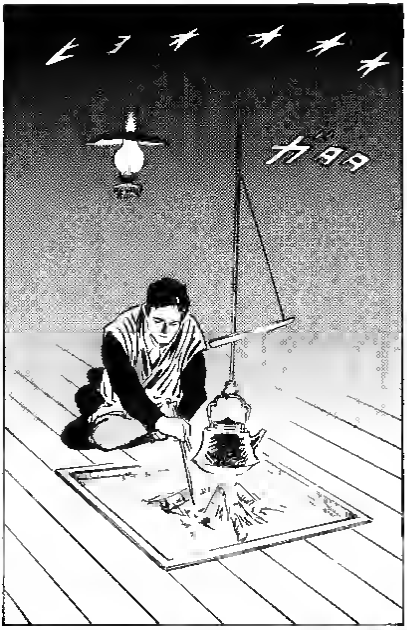
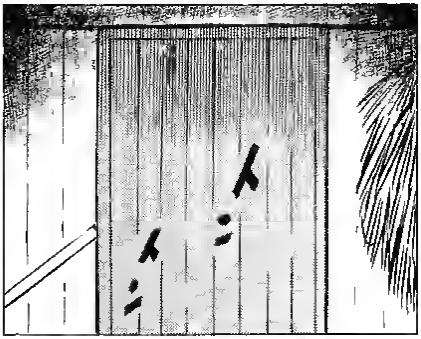
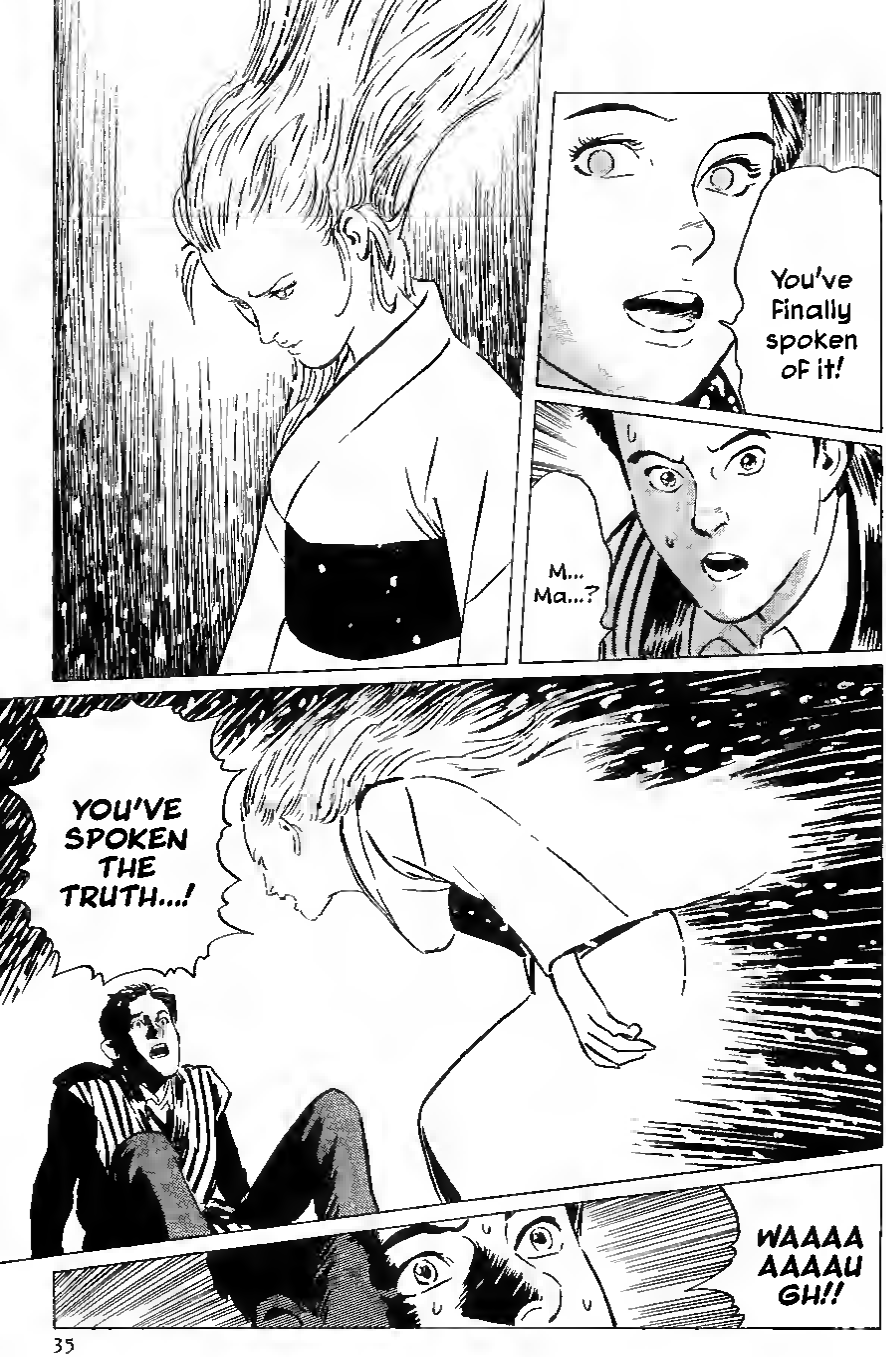

カタタ


トン
トン

Ma
...!?

I can't believe you remember me... Look at how much you've grown, Yojihei!
My ma, who I heard was dead, came back from the sanatorium! I finally saw my ma!

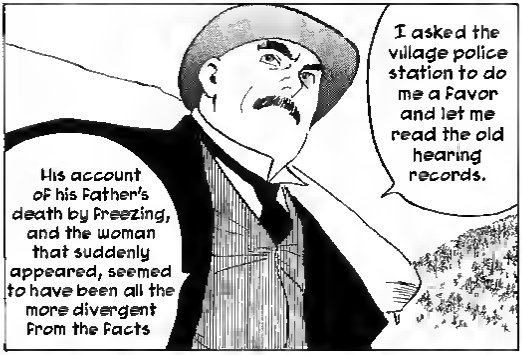
ハァ ハァ ハァ
...It was on a night like this that Pa died.
A year went by, living with my ma... and I finally let up...
Huh?


You've finally spoken of it!
M... Ma...?
YOU'VE SPOKEN THE TRUTH...!
WAAAAAAAAU GH!!

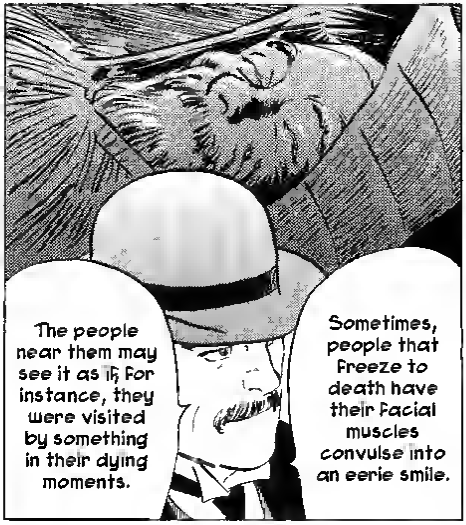
MA...!!

I was left alone yet again...
See, ain't that a little different from last time? I swear, his story changes every time he tells it! Hohhohho!
I'm just glad I could hear the story... I must be going now
No, it's alright ...
Oh, look at him. He nods off whenever things don't go his way. Come on, wake up now!

I actually learned by chance that Yojihei's story was much different than it used to be, so I came to make sure of it.
I see...

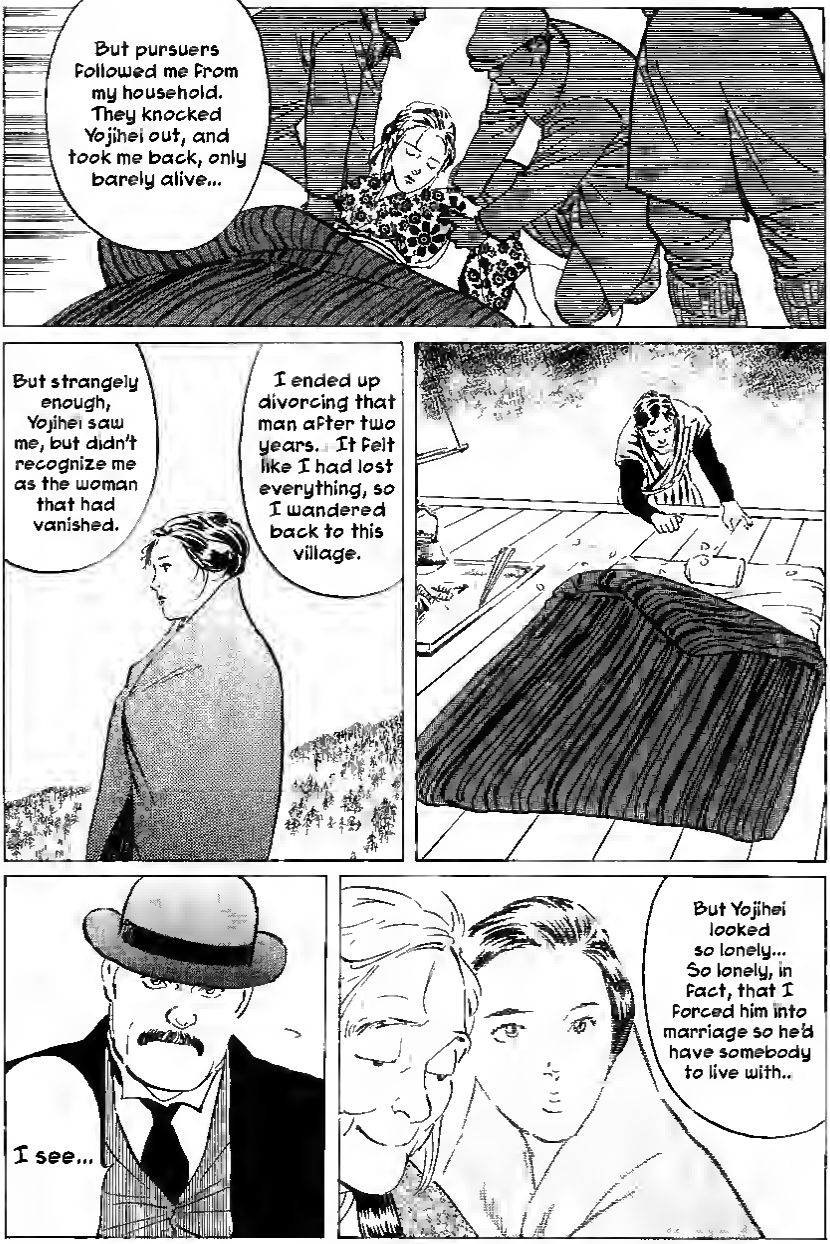

I asked the village police station to do me a favor and let me read the old hearing records.
His account of his father's death by freezing, and the woman that suddenly appeared, seemed to have been all the more divergent from the facts

By something luscious, yet dreadful...


The people near them may see it as if, for instance, they were visited by something in their dying moments.
Sometimes, people that freeze to death have their facial muscles convulse into an eerie smile.

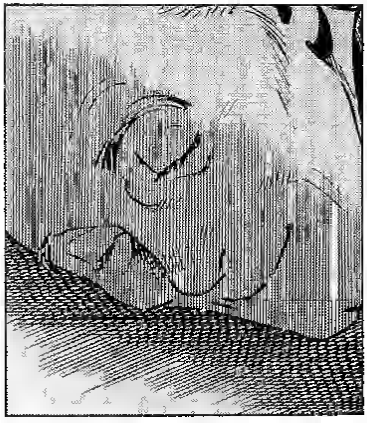
It's the climate...
What I am interested in is what it is that endlessly drives people to tell stories.
Oh, I don't have any intention of accusing Yojihei for anything.
People's memories can be ambiguous, and it's natural that legends can be changed by the person telling them.
It's a fact that the talent to spin a variety of dreams and tales was born here in Tohoku.
Something about this climate, locked in the snow and solitude, must have fostered this talent.

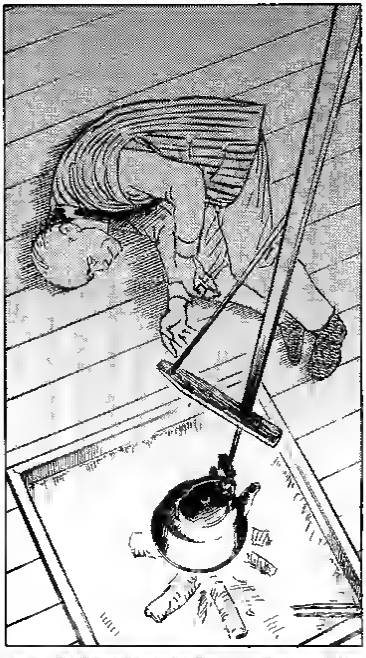
it was I who visited Yojihei's house long ago.
...Professor Munakata,
What did you say!?
But a blizzard started and stranded us in the mountains. My lover slipped and fell into a ravine, and I was freezing as I looked for him...
I was engaged to be married to a merchant of Aomori, arranged by our parents, but I could not give up on my lover, so we eloped that night.

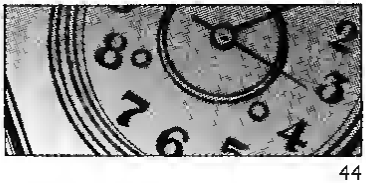

But pursuers followed me from my household. They knocked Yojihei out, and took me back, only barely alive...
But strangely enough, Yojihei saw me, but didn't recognize me as the woman that had vanished.
I ended up divorcing that man after two years. It felt like I had lost everything, so I wandered back to this village.
I see...
But Yojihei looked so lonely... So lonely, in fact, that I forced him into marriage so he'd have somebody to live with..

I've simply stayed here far too long...
And that's the truth. I decide to stay with him until he remembered me, but now look at how old he is... Hohhohho!
It's time I ended it all...

Yojihei...
Come over here!
Yojihei...





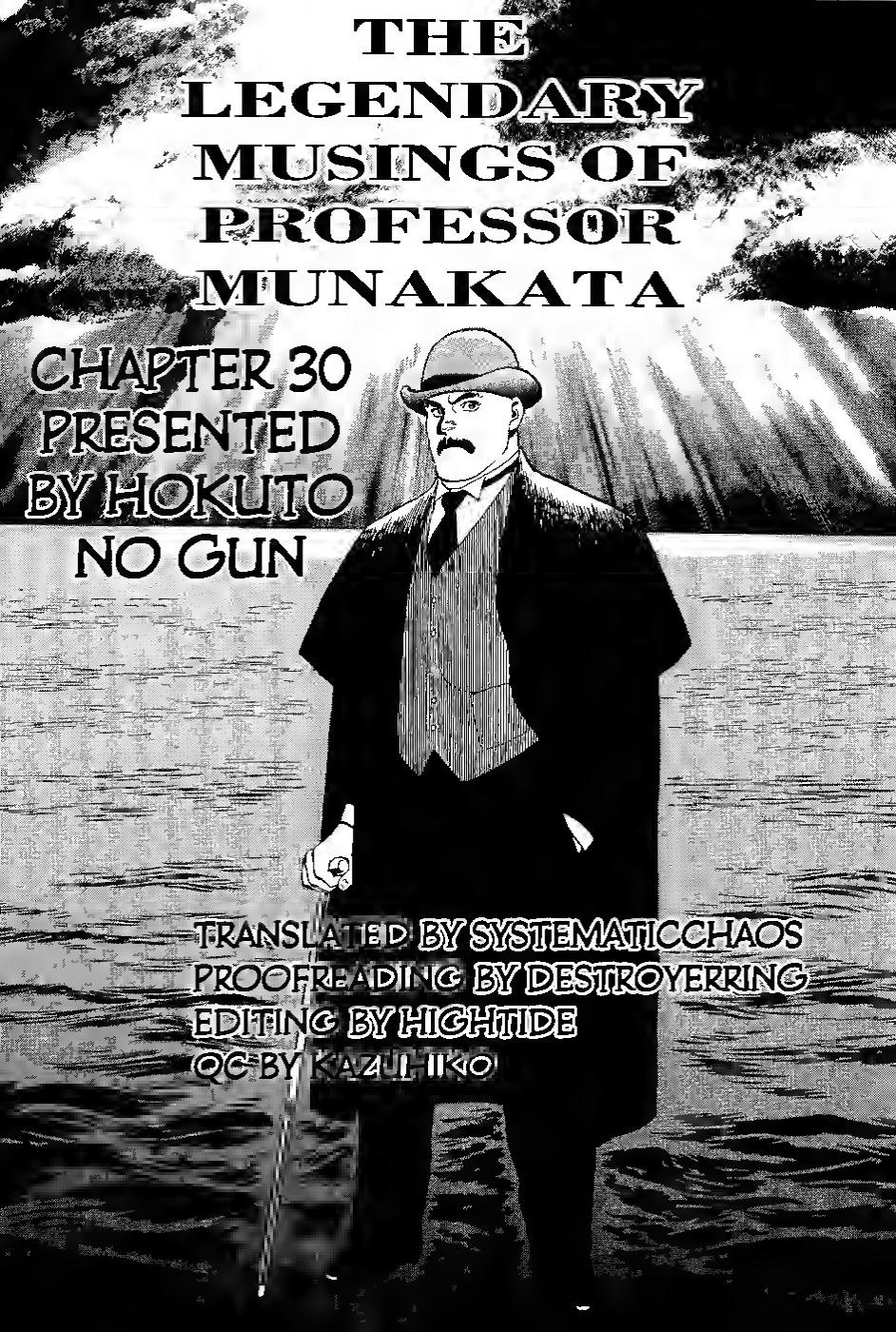


File 30: Smile of Ice – END

THE LEGENDARY MUSINGS OF PROFESSOR MUNAKATA

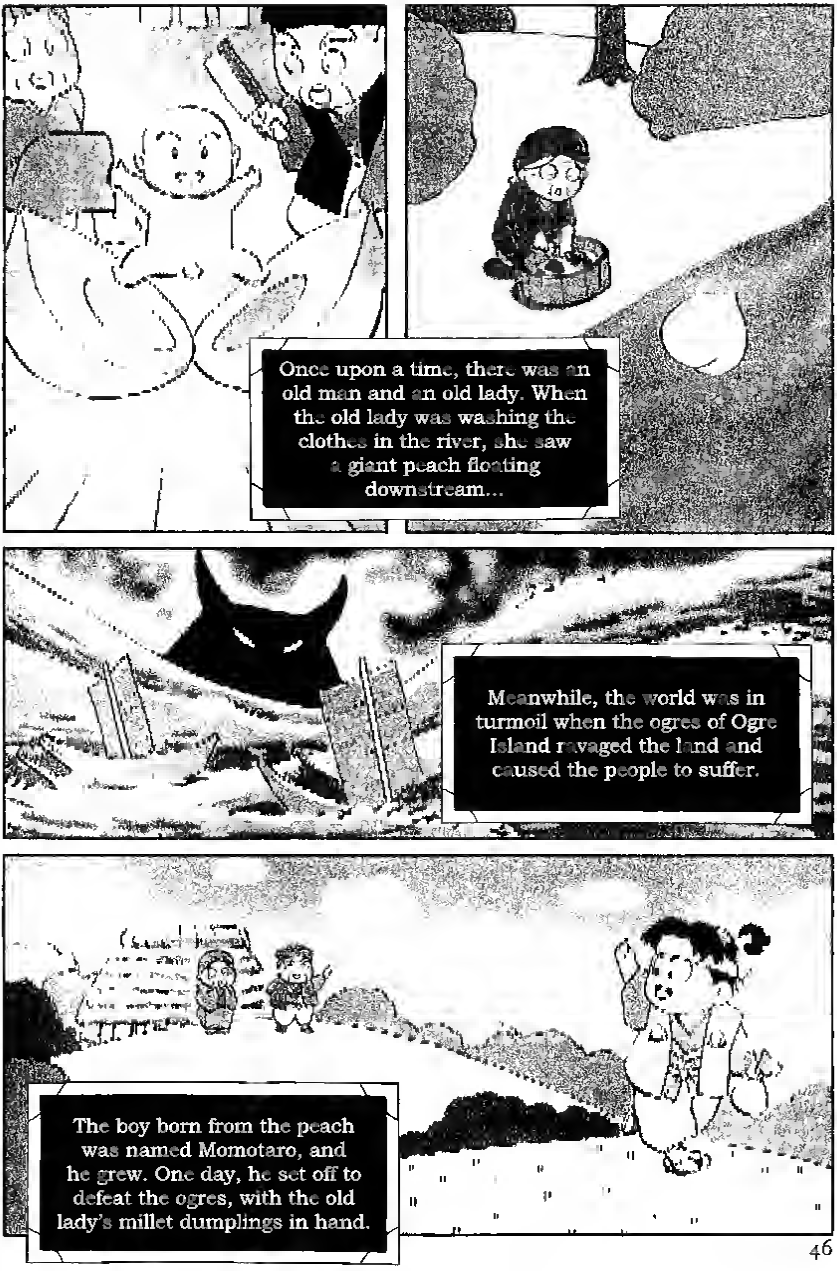
CHAPTER 30

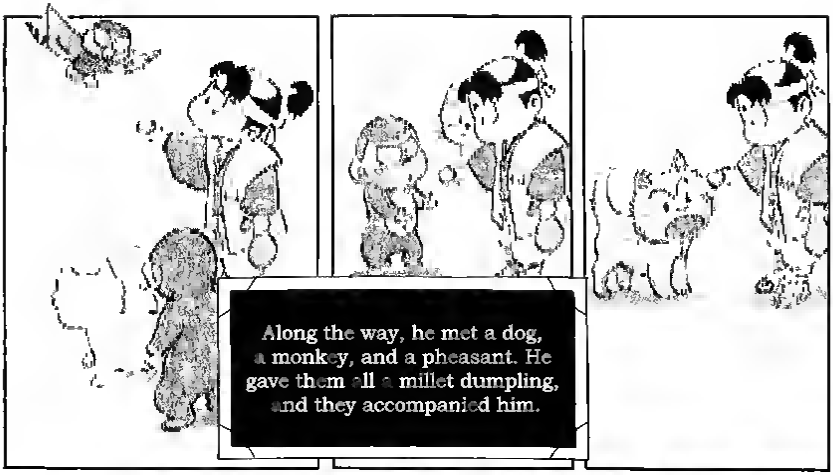
PRESENTED BY HOKUTO NO GUN

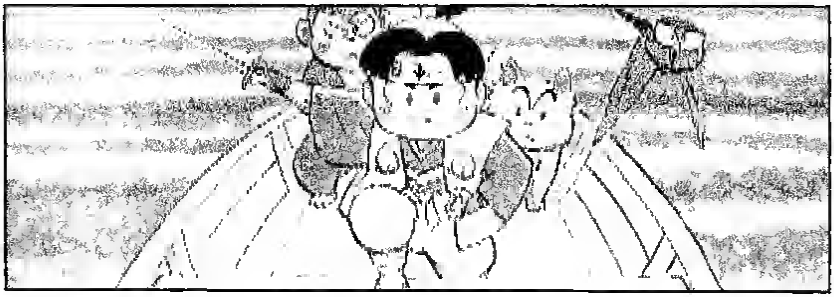


TRANSLATED BY SYSTEMATICCHAOS
PROOFREADING BY DESTROYERRING
EDITING BY HIGHTIDE
QC BY KAZUHIKO

File 31:
The Momotaro Connection

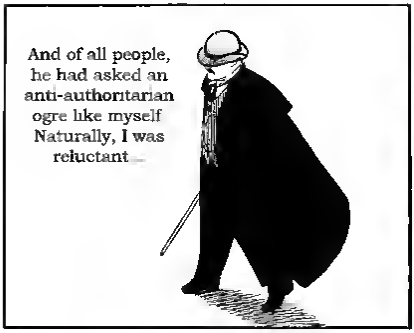

Once upon a time, there was an old man and an old lady. When the old lady was washing the clothes in the river, she saw a giant peach floating downstream...
Meanwhile, the world was in turmoil when the ogres of Ogre Island ravaged the land and caused the people to suffer.
The boy born from the peach was named Momotaro, and he grew. One day, he set off to defeat the ogres, with the old lady's millet dumplings in hand.

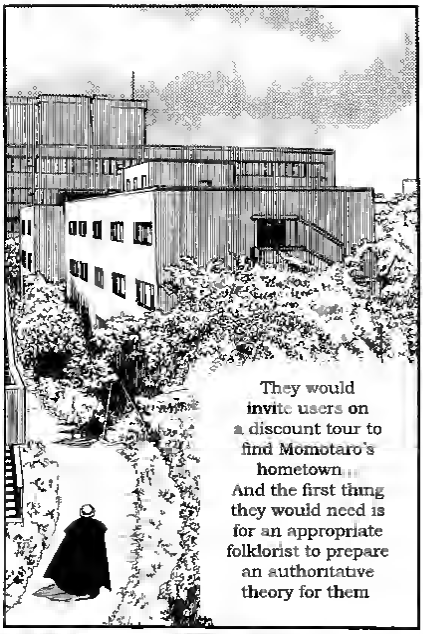

Along the way, he met a dog, a monkey, and a pheasant. He gave them all a millet dumpling, and they accompanied him.

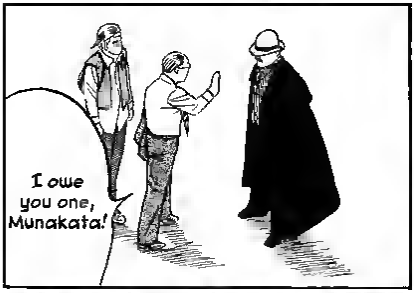


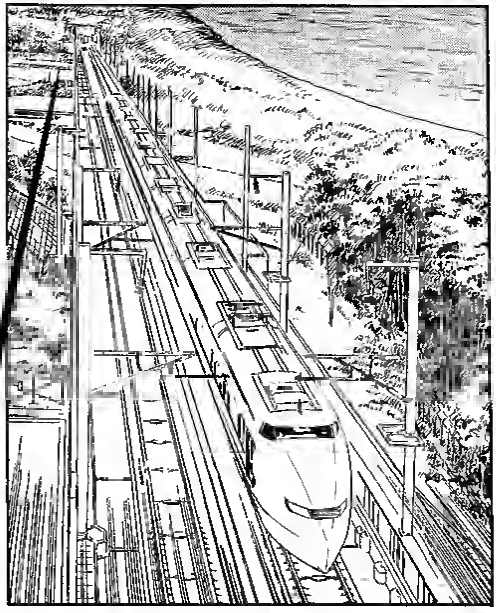
And finally, Momotaro's band of fighters reached Ogre Island, and their battle with the ogres was about to begin...

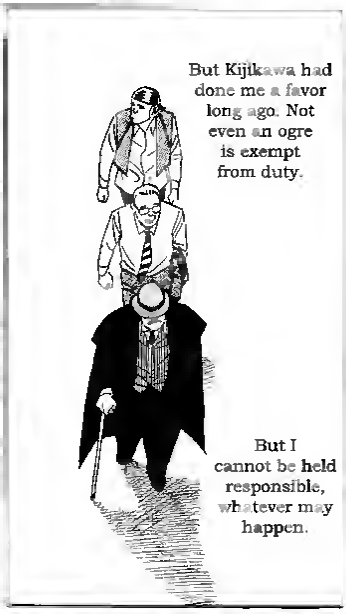
Oh, shit! That Red Ogre's attack brought my HP down to 4! Now what are my weapons..
Hey, Sanage!
Oh, sorry about that, Munakata. Well, this is what the game looks like.
What's this about red ogres?
The game development company that Kijikawa, my friend from school, was managing director of, was planning an event to coincide with the release of their latest game, "Momotaro's Adventures"
Help you find Momotaro's hometown... right?
I'm begging you. Please help us.

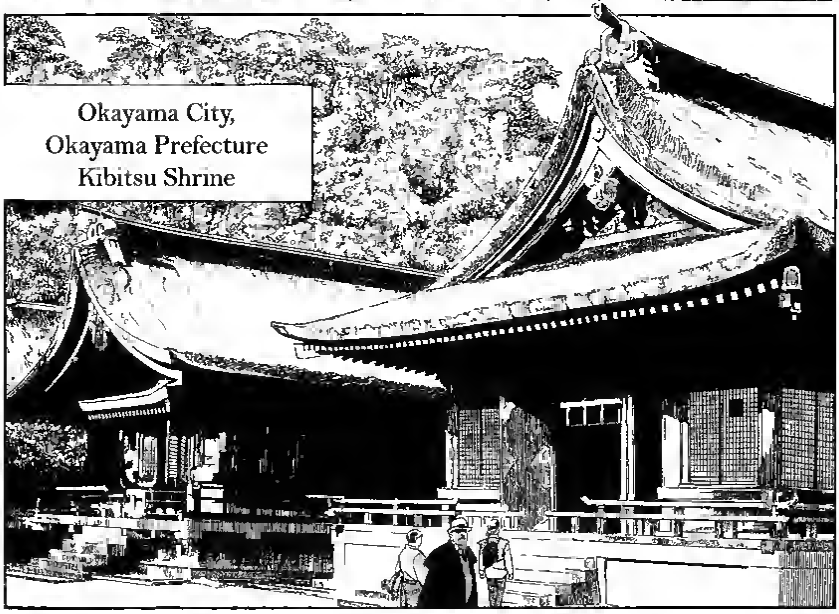

And of all people, he had asked an anti-authoritarian ogre like myself
Naturally, I was reluctant...


They would invite users on a discount tour to find Momotaro's hometown...
And the first thing they would need is for an appropriate folklorist to prepare an authoritative theory for them


I owe you one, Munakata!

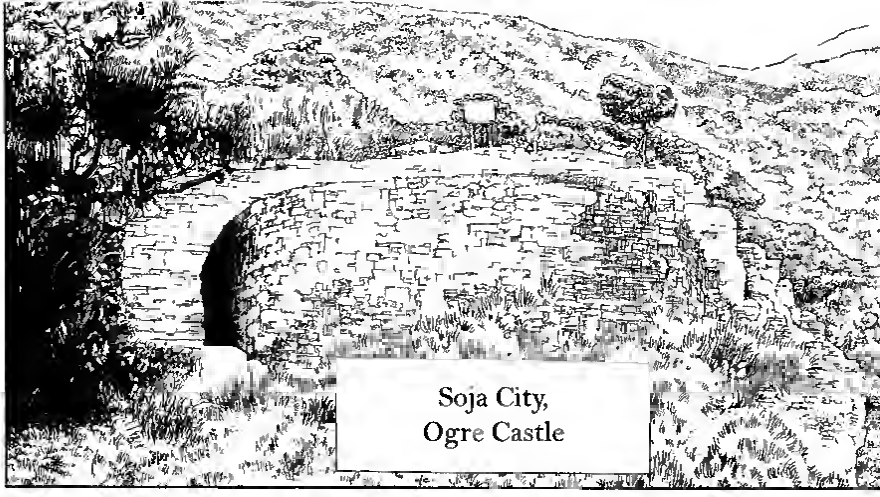


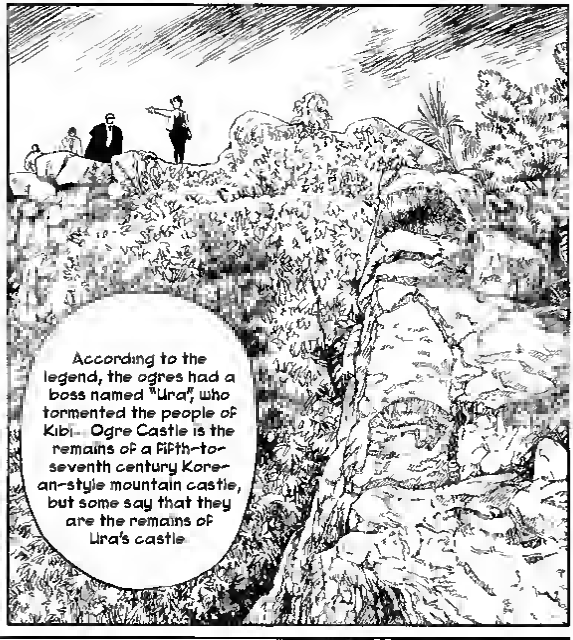

But Kijikawa had done me a favor long ago. Not even an ogre is exempt from duty.
But I cannot be held responsible, whatever may happen.

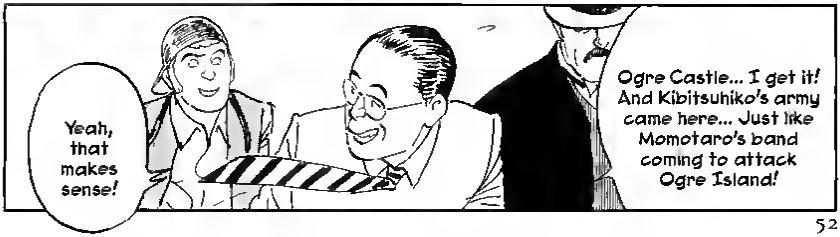

Okayama City,
Okayama Prefecture
Kibitsu Shrine

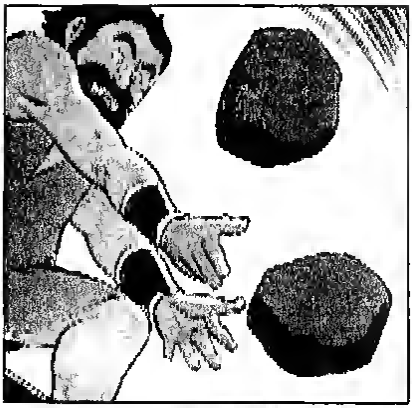
Now the plan was that someone from the visitors' center was supposed to guide us... Ohh, here she comes now!

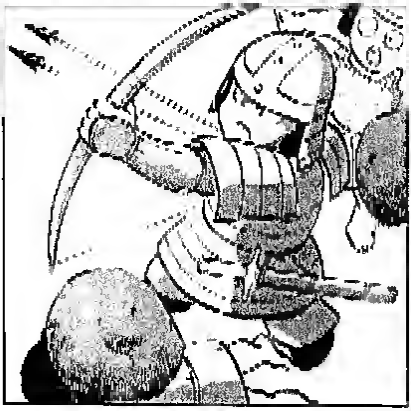
They used to grow millet here, but now it's famous for its peaches.
I see. So Okayama Prefecture was once Kibi Province, hence "Kibi Dumplings".
My name's Inukai. Allow me to accompany you.
Hello? Yeah... Uh-huh... Huh? Ohhhh... Keeheehee! No way!
Ring ring ring!
Someone once got really famous for suggesting that Kibitsuhiko, the deity enshrined at Kibitsu Shrine, was the prototype for Momotaro.
...Impressive. And there were "ogres" in the Province of Kibi.
According to the "Nihon Shoki", wasn't Kibihiko one of the Four Generals dispatched to the west by Emperor Sujin to subjugate the region?

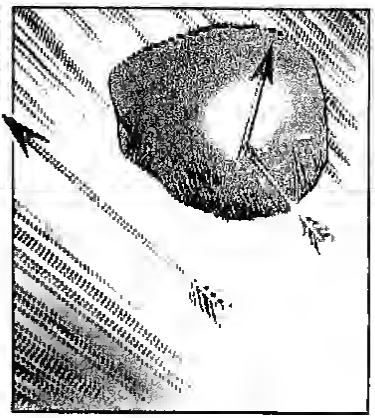

Soja City,
Ogre Castle


According to the legend, the ogres had a boss named "Ura", who tormented the people of Kibi. Ogre Castle is the remains of a fifth-to-seventh century Korean-style mountain castle, but some say that they are the remains of Ura's castle.

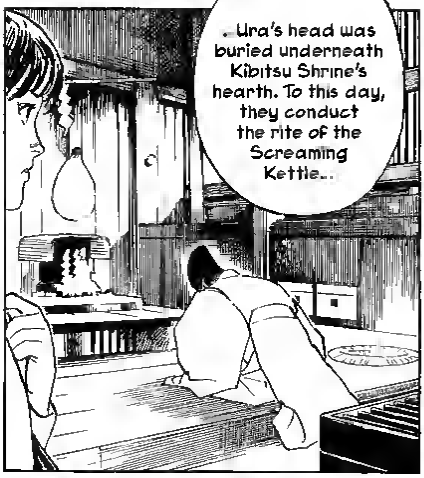

Yeah, that makes sense!
Ogre Castle... I get it! And Kibitsuhiko's army came here... Just like Momotaro's band coming to attack Ogre Island!

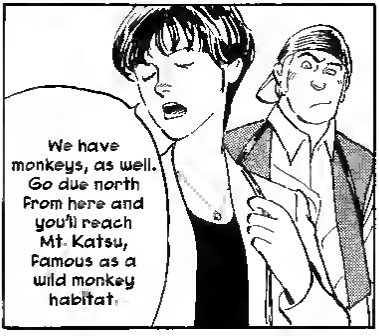


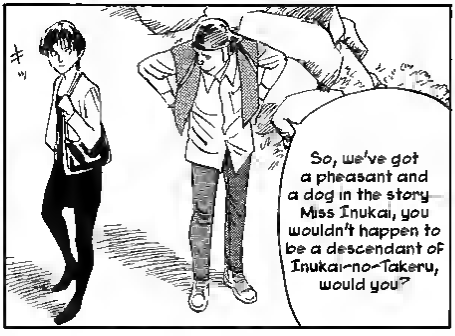




Ura, spurting blood like a river, transformed into a pheasant to escape, but Kibitsuhiko transformed into a hawk and pursued him He transformed into a carp to dive underwater, but Kibitsuhiko transformed into a cormorant and caught him
But even with his head cut off, Ura's screams continued to shake the mountains and the plains Kibitsuhiko ordered his subordinate Inukai-no-Takeru to feed Ura's head to the dogs



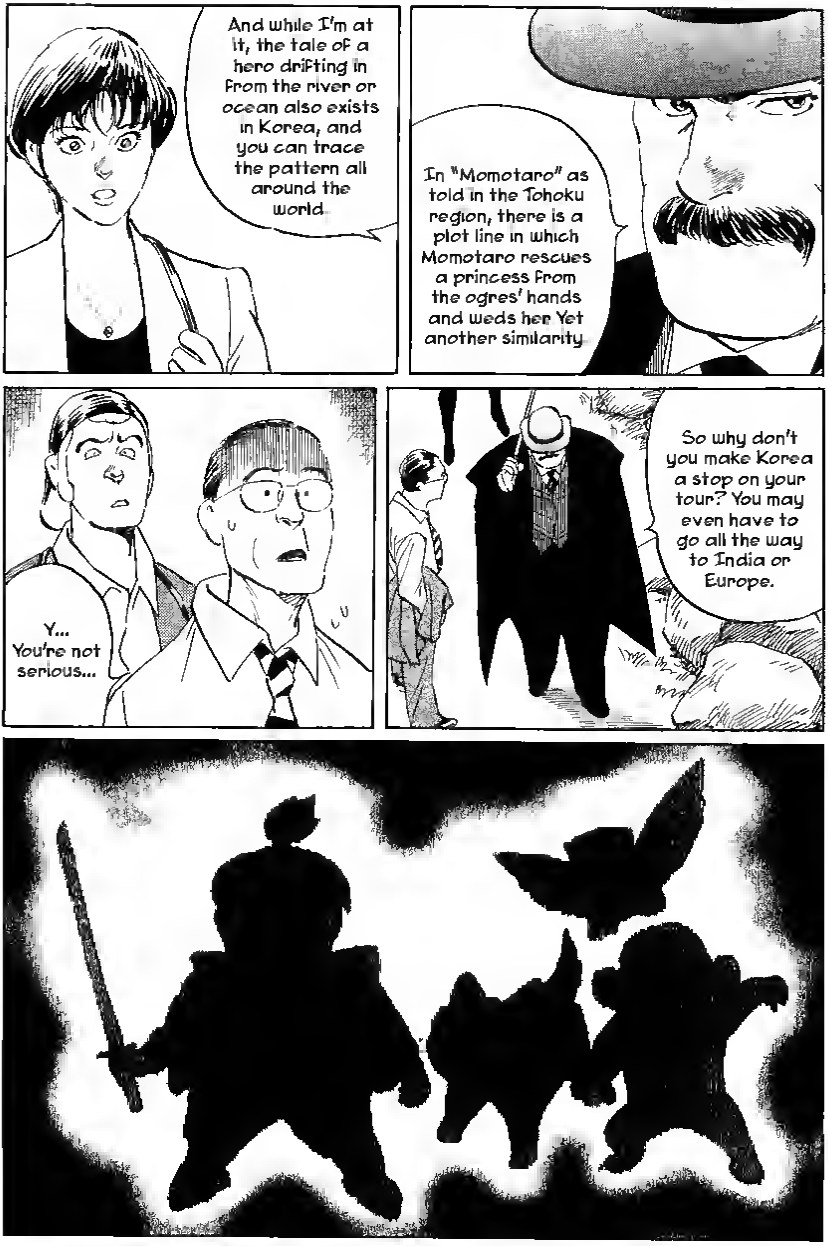


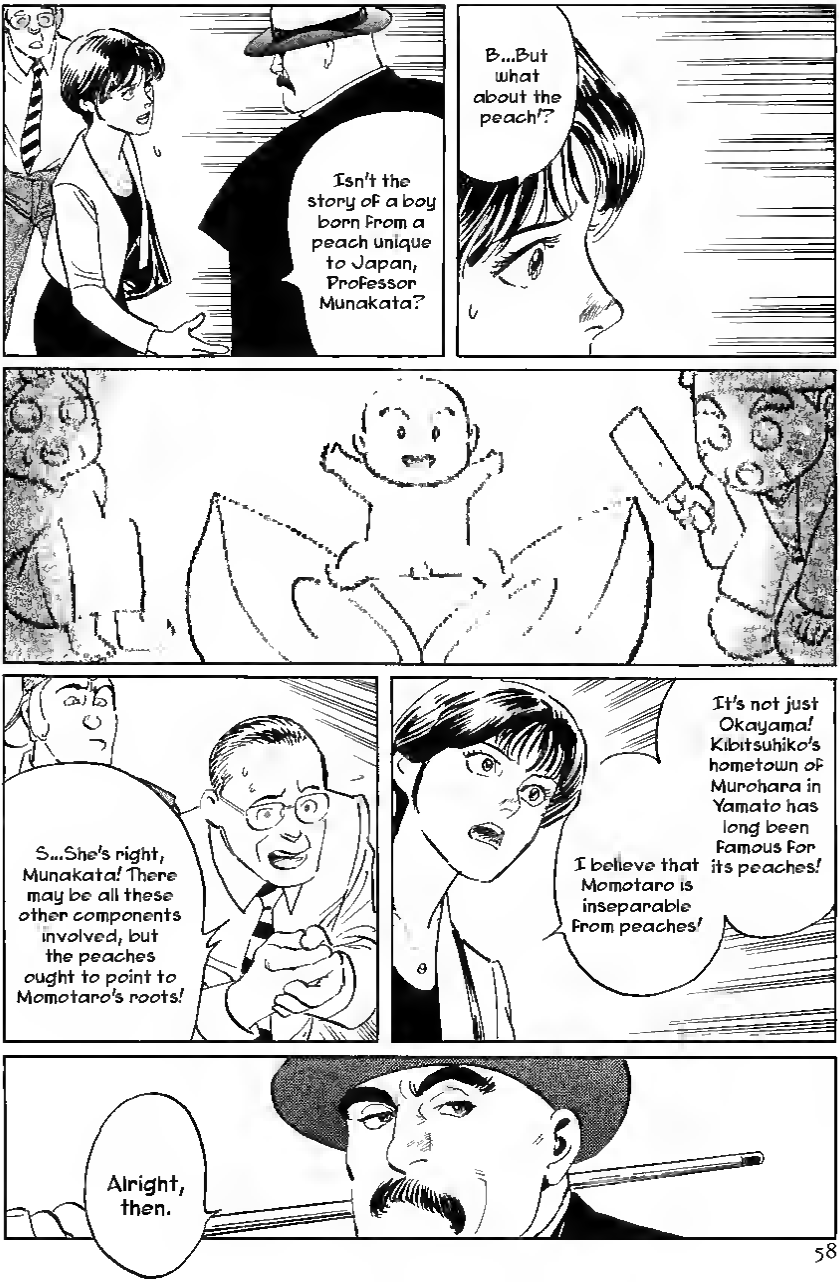

So, we've got a pheasant and a dog in the story— Miss Inukai, you wouldn't happen to be a descendant of Inukai-no-Takeru, would you?

Accept this→Turn to page 8

Not yet→Turn the page

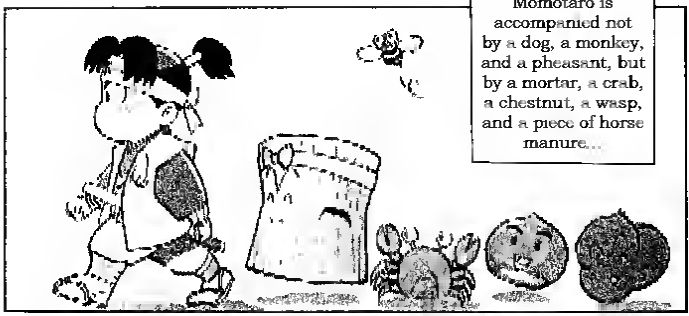
"Momotaro" is a folk tale told widely across the nation. I'm opposed to seeking a specific regional or historical origin.
If all you need are a few specific components, you wouldn't be limited to just Japan!
Huh...?
There we have monkeys, birds, and Ogre Island.
The tale in which he besieges Ravana's island to reclaim his wife had been transmitted to Japan long ago, and "birds" were also among the animals that assisted King Rama.
Take the Hindu epic of Ramayana, for instance. There is a tale in which King Rama, whose wife had been carried away, calls upon the assistance of the monkey Hanuman to defeat the Rakshasa king Ravana.

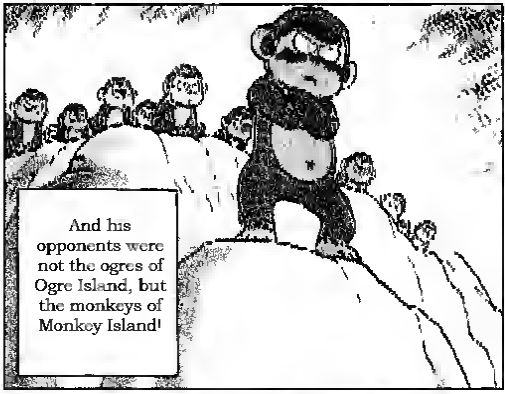

And while I'm at it, the tale of a hero drifting in from the river or ocean also exists in Korea, and you can trace the pattern all around the world.
In "Momotaro" as told in the Tohoku region, there is a plot line in which Momotaro rescues a princess from the ogres' hands and weds her. Yet another similarity.
Y... You're not serious...
So why don't you make Korea a stop on your tour? You may even have to go all the way to India or Europe.

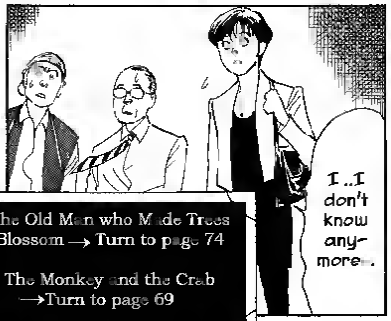

Isn't the story of a boy born from a peach unique to Japan, Professor Munakata?
B...But what about the peach!?
S...She's right, Munakata! There may be all these other components involved, but the peaches ought to point to Momotaro's roots!
I believe that Momotaro is inseparable from peaches!
It's not just Okayama! Kibitsuhiko's hometown of Murohara in Yamato has long been famous for its peaches!
Alright, then.

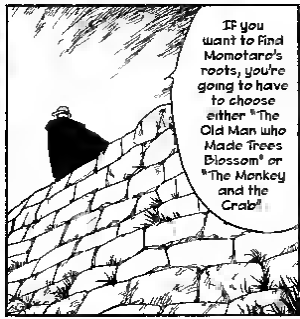
Once upon a time, there was an old man and an old lady. The old man went to the mountains to chop firewood, while the old lady went to wash clothes in the river. Then a giant peach floated downstream...
If you're so fixated on the peaches, then how about this story?
It's a tale told in Toyama Prefecture...
And out of the peach came a dog.
The dog grew, and came to hunt many deer from the mountains. Thanks to it, the old man's household became very rich.
But the wicked old man next door caught wind of this...
A DOG!?

The dog was buried, and from its burial site grew a tree... Before long, the good old man burned down the tree, and when he spread the ashes on dead trees...
The old man next door borrowed the dog and let it loose into the mountains, but it would not bring him what he wanted, so he killed the dog in a rage
"The Old Man who Made Trees Blossom"...!
I...Isn't that...
Oh, that reminds me. The tale of "Momotaro" as told in Ehime and Hiroshima is quite amusing...
It's not that they combined the Fairy tales on purpose. This is the way it has been told for generations.
This demonstrates that Momotaro was not the only one born from a peach


Momotaro is accompanied not by a dog, a monkey, and a pheasant, but by a mortar, a crab, a chestnut, a wasp, and a piece of horse manure...






If you want to find Momotaro's roots, you're going to have to choose either "The Old Man who Made Trees Blossom" or "The Monkey and the Crab"!

The Old Man who Made Trees Blossom → Turn to page 74

The Monkey and the Crab →Turn to page 69

And I'm saying, we oughta ignore that bigoted professor and stick to our original plan!
Yeah, but...
Hey! Pick that up!
I mean, no one's gonna be on the tour but a bunch of gamer kids and their parents, and the visitors' centers are gonna be happy for the attention...

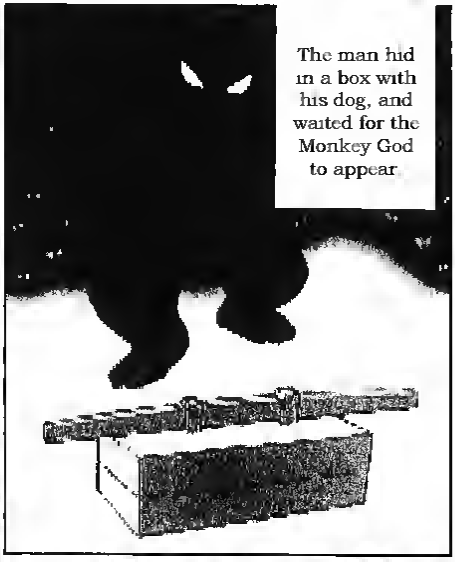
.....
There's a bin over there!
I've always been half-doubting the theory that Kibitsuhiko was the prototype to Momotaro, and I've always wanted to ask a specialist!
I love Okayama, but it's not like I'll do anything to bring tourists here!
So it's there after all...
Professor Munakata! I asked the town hall, and found it!

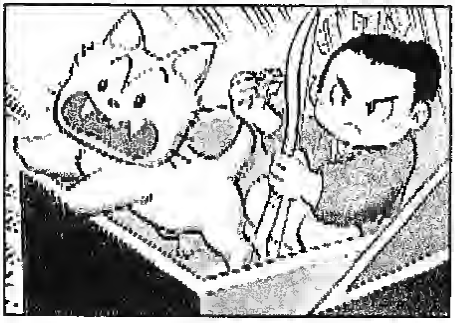
Sarujima... Sarugami Shrine?
And there's a place called Sarugami Shrine on top of a little mountain.
Just a little bit northeast from Soja, there's a village called Sarujima.
???
I...I see! So Sarugami Shrine worships the monkey that accompanied Momotaro! Am I right, Munakata?
East of Okayama, there's Nakayama Shrine, which is famous for its legend of the Monkey God. And Sarugami Shrine is drawn from that legend.
There are similar shrines all over the nation I had a hunch there may be one here when I heard that there was a monkey habitat there.

We won't know till we get there, whether the monkey was on Momotaro's side or against him...

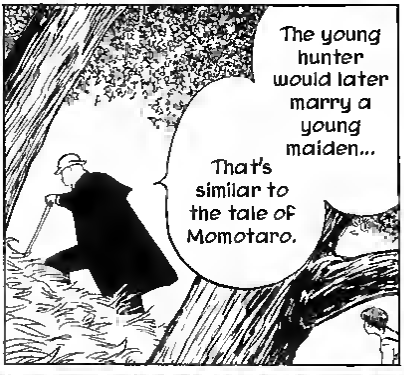
The Seto Inland Sea looks closer than I'd thought...
Judging by how the name of the region means Monkey Island, the sea may have come up to here once.
Phew... It feels like no one's been here in years...
H...He's so happy-go-lucky! This mountain's pretty damn steep!
The god of Nakayama Shrine was a tyrannical monkey god, and the people would sacrifice a young maiden to him every year.
Nakayama Shrine, Tsuyama City, Okayama Prefecture
The legend of the Monkey God is in the "Konjaku Monogatari"..

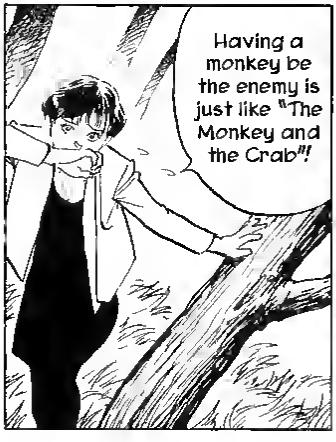
One day, a hunter came to visit, and he learned that beautiful maidens were being sacrificed.
If he did not, he would ravage their crops and steal their belongings, leaving them to starve.

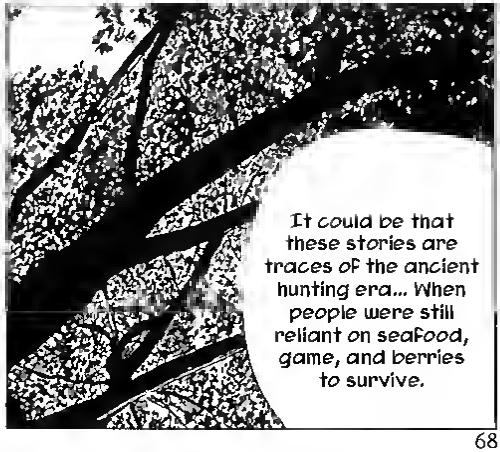

The man hid in a box with his dog, and waited for the Monkey God to appear.



The old man's dog caught deer in the mountains, and it is also a hunting dog here.
What strikes me is the hunter's dog.


The young hunter would later marry a young maiden...
That's similar to the tale of Momotaro.

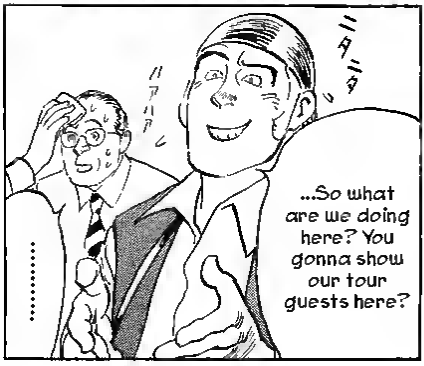

Having a monkey be the enemy is just like "The Monkey and the Crab"!


It could be that these stories are traces of the ancient hunting era... When people were still reliant on seafood, game, and berries to survive.

In "The Monkey and the Crab", a monkey that hogged a persimmon tree's fruit kills the crab, and is avenged by the crab's son who calls for help...

The monkey that hogs persimmons, and the Monkey God that demands sacrifices...
Or it could have been simple betrayal.
After all, monkeys are irresponsible, frivolous, full of shallow wit, with no sincerity...
So you think the monkey was a bad guy? Like he pretended to be Momotaro's retainer but was actually the ogres' spy... Keeheeheehee!
The hell is that supposed to mean ...?

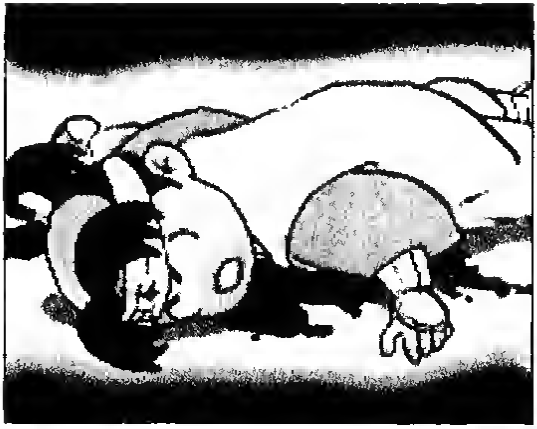
Well, thanks for your hard work, Professor Munakata! I think we're done here! You've been a big help!

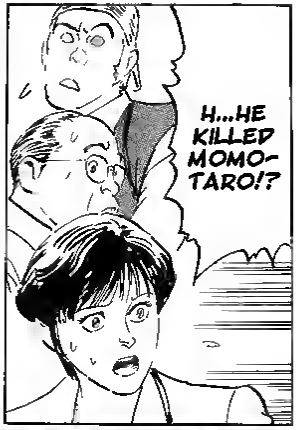

ハハハ
ハハハ
.....
...So what are we doing here? You gonna show our tour guests here?

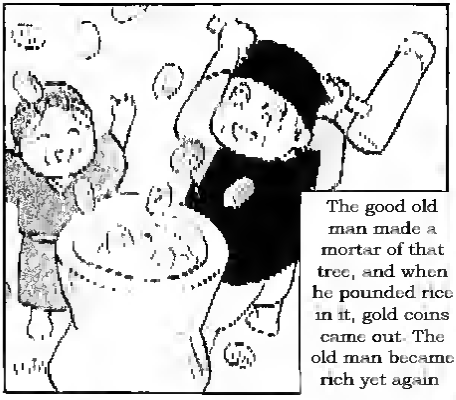
THIS IS MY JOB! I HAVE TO PUT TOGETHER A TOUR COURSE!
I'VE GOT NO TIME TO BE STUCK IN ALL THIS WEIRD SHIT!
If you want to leave, why don't you just leave? I'll give you some millet dumplings as a souvenir
EEP...
EEEEEE EEEEEE EEEK!

I'm guessing they're mon-keys...
EEEEEEE EEEK! EEEEEEE EEEEK!
Don't panic. They're a little too small and misshapen to be human bones.
SHUT UP!
It looks like it was bitten by some-thing...
A DOG...!?

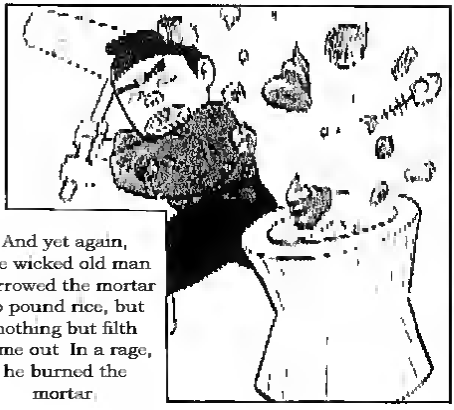
The Momotaro legend also contains this tale...
The old man became rich
And the wicked old man next door caught wind of it
He buried it somewhere in the village, and told the old man who raised him about the
Ogre Island was filled with countless treasure, and Momotaro naturally took some of it back with him
In a rage, the old man killed Momotaro...
He asked Momotaro for the hiding place and dug it out, but found nothing but manure and trash



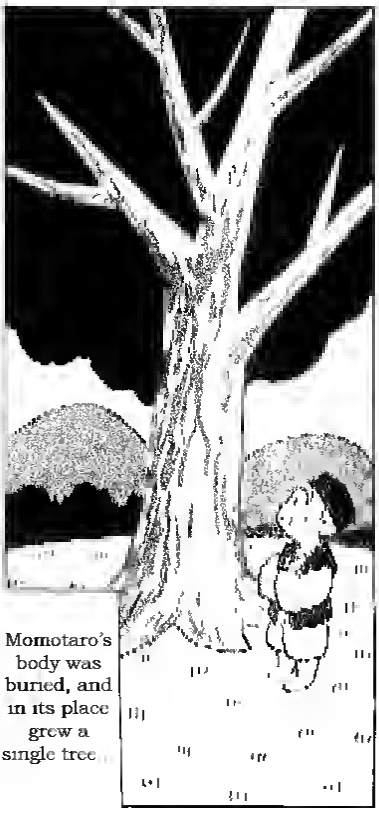




The good old man made a mortar of that tree, and when he pounded rice in it, gold coins came out. The old man became rich yet again

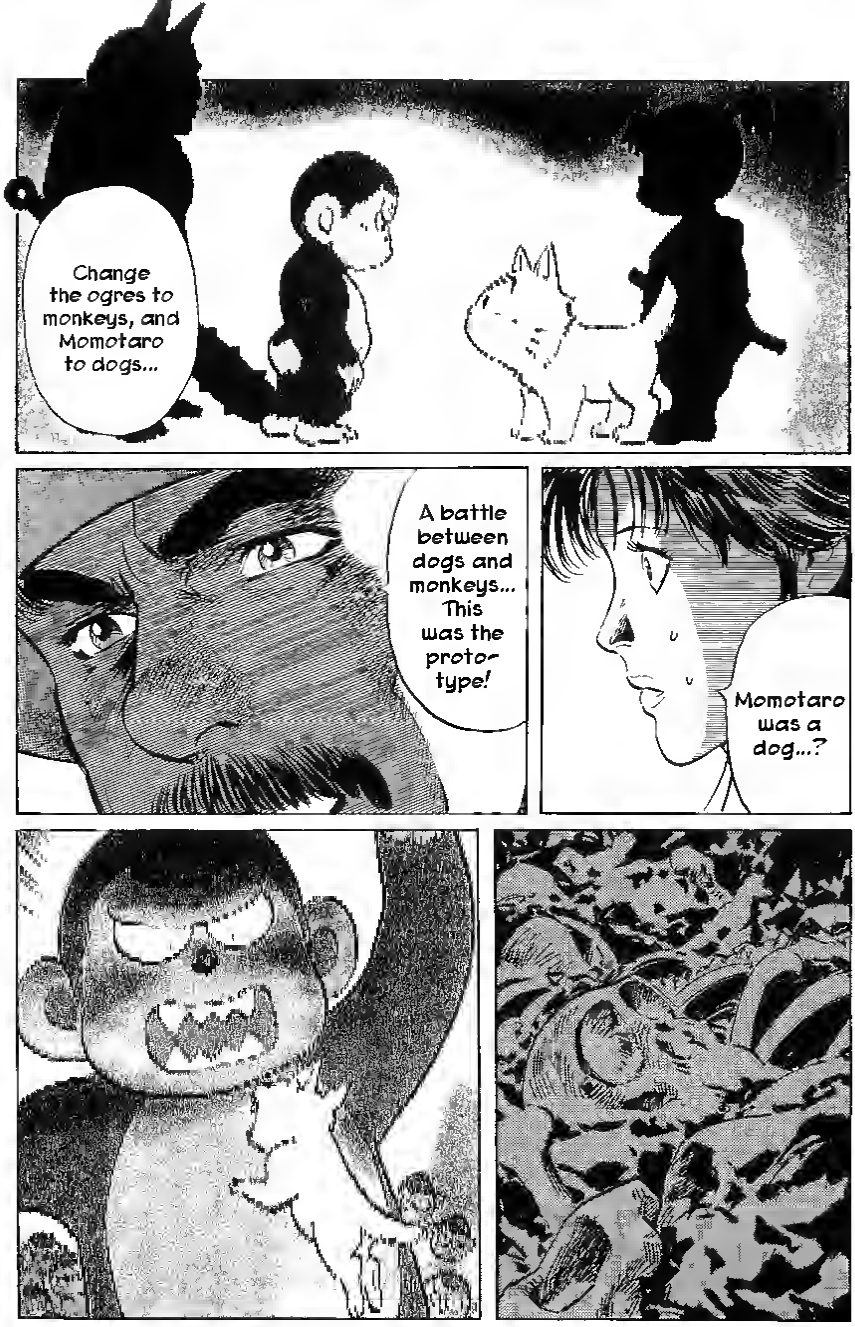


And yet again, the wicked old man borrowed the mortar to pound rice, but nothing but filth came out. In a rage, he burned the mortar.



Momotaro's body was buried, and in its place grew a single tree.

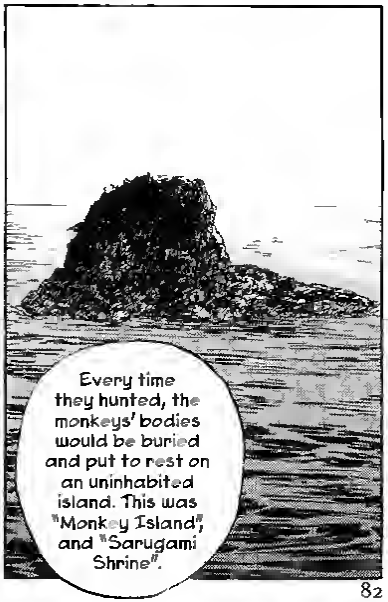
And those ashes... The ashes of the tree grown from Momotaro's body, could make flowers blossom on dead trees
If the three folk tales of "Momotaro", "The Old Man who Made Trees Blossom", and "The Monkey and the Crab" share the same root... Then all we must do is revert the parts back to their ancient forms!
I...I can't believe there was a tale so absurd...
It may be the absurd tales that are closest to the original.
The more well-known the folk tale, the more palatable it is made.


Change the ogres to monkeys, and Momotaro to dogs...
A battle between dogs and monkeys... This was the prototype!
Momotaro was a dog...?

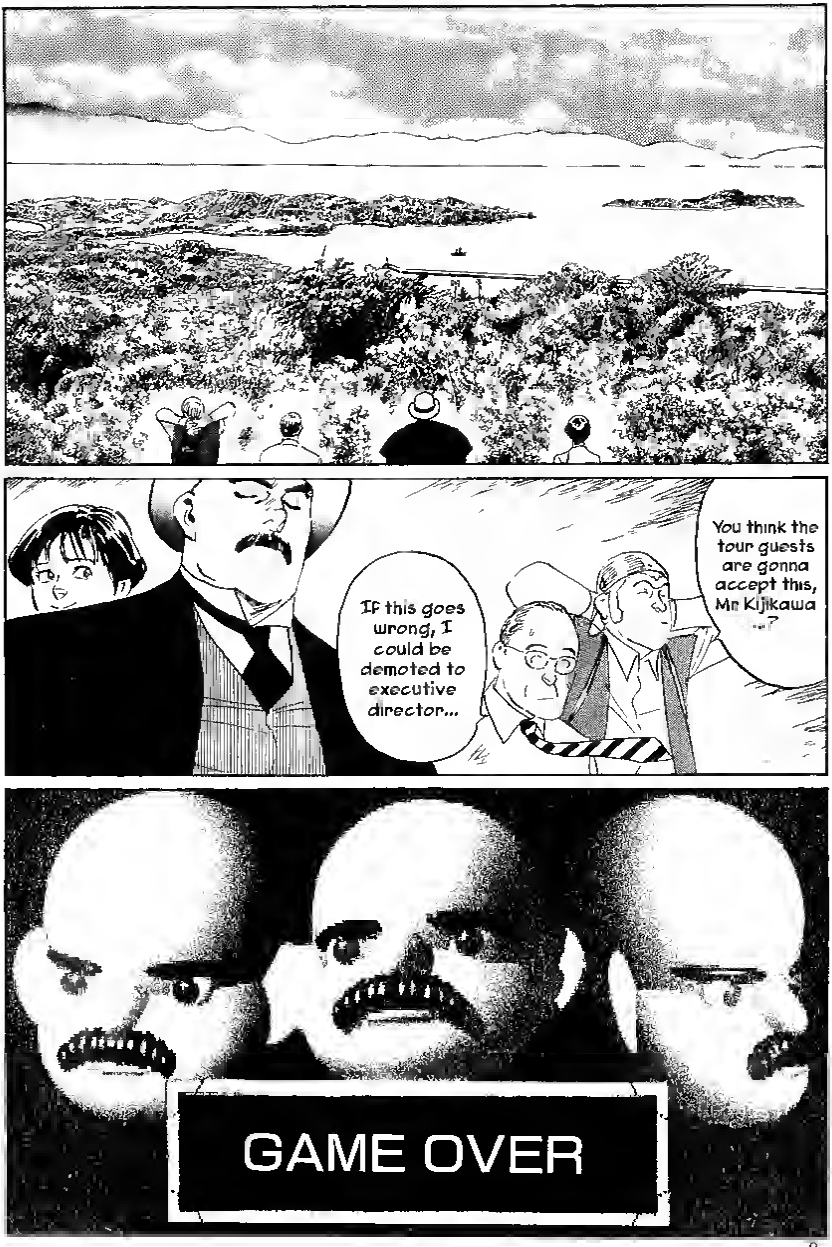
Jomon society was centered on hunting and gathering. Agriculture already existed, but it was still primitive and their harvests were minimal...
Even today, they can do great harm to the agricultural industry. They must have been feared back in the day...
The weather was not their only threat. There were many harmful animals, such as monkeys, boars, and birds, that would eat and ravage their crops.

The only ones who would fight for the humans were the hunting dogs.

They would pass on the tale of the brave dogs that defeated the monkeys.
And the affectionate gravestone they gave their dogs was a legend...


Every time they hunted, the monkeys' bodies would be buried and put to rest on an uninhabited island. This was "Monkey Island", and "Sarugami Shrine".

This tale, with but a mere semblance of its ancient form, lived on across the nation...
A variety of different components came in, until the dogs were replaced by a human named Momotaro, and the monkeys were replaced by ogres
But time passed, and memory grew hazy...
I believe this is the history behind the legend of Momotaro.

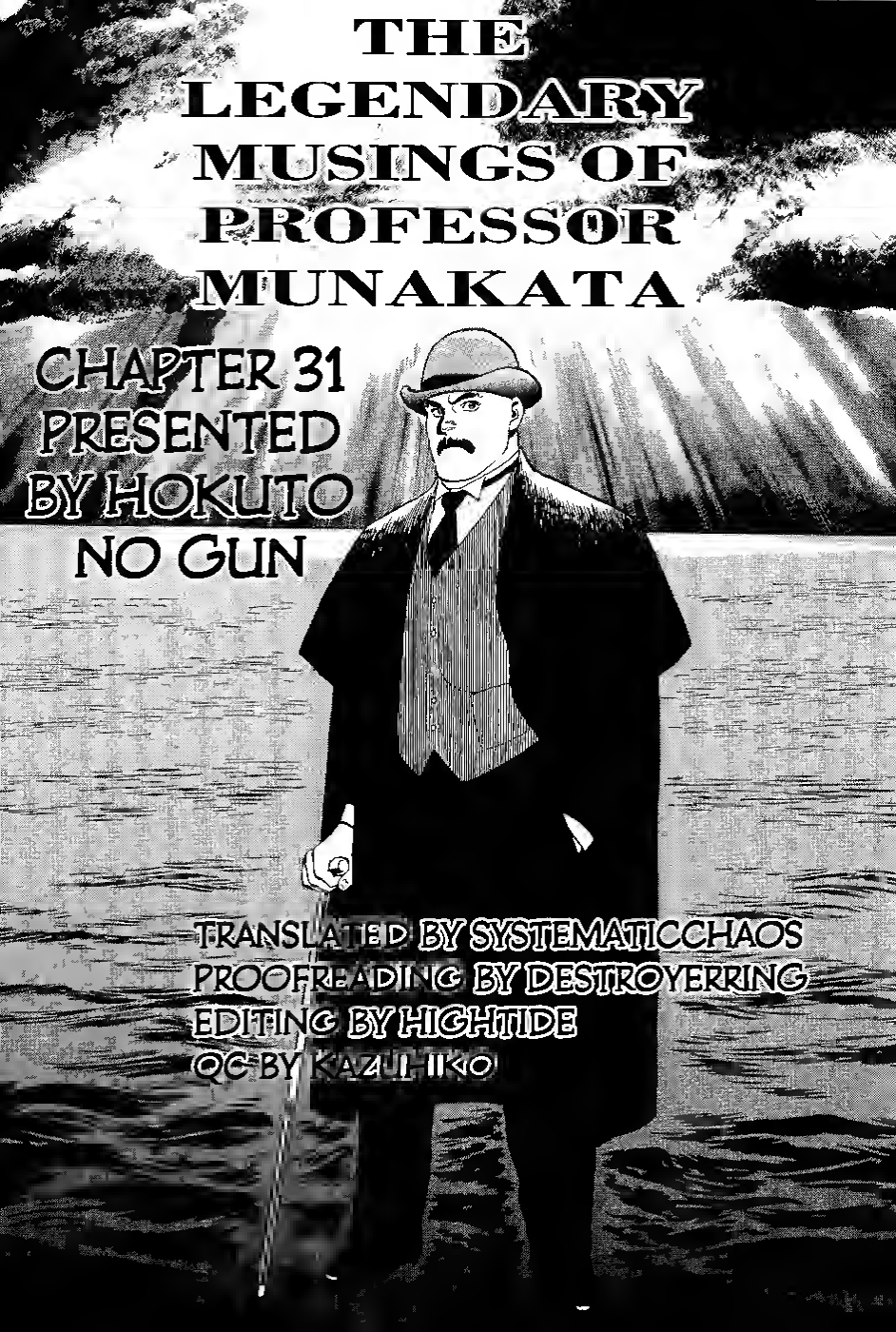

If this goes wrong, I could be demoted to executive director...
You think the tour guests are gonna accept this, Mr Kijikawa ...?
GAME OVER

File 31: The Momotaro Connection – END

THE LEGENDARY MUSINGS OF PROFESSOR MUNAKATA

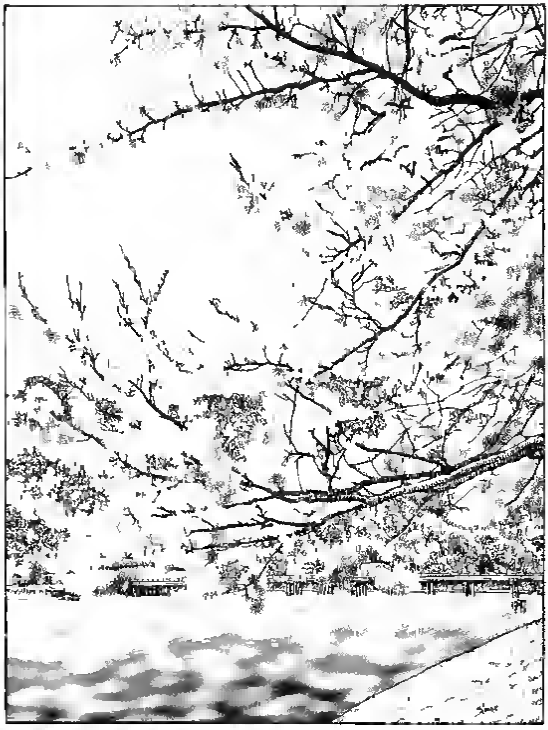
CHAPTER 31

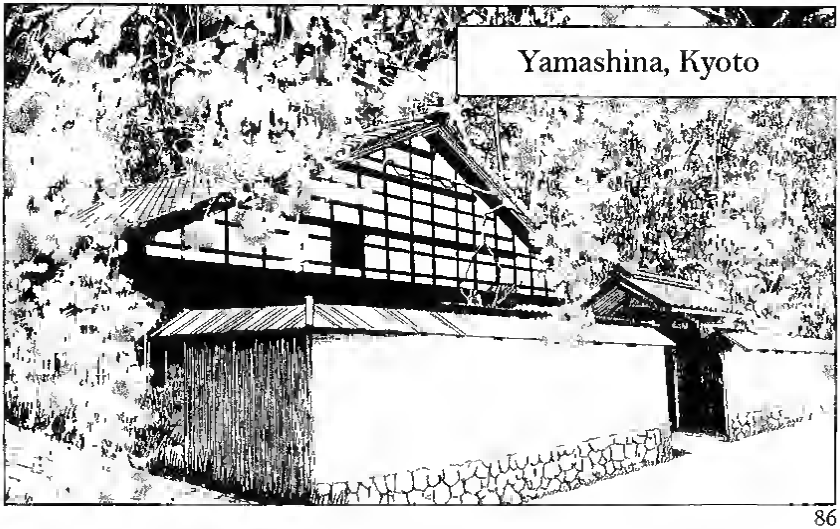
PRESENTED BY HOKUTO NO GUN



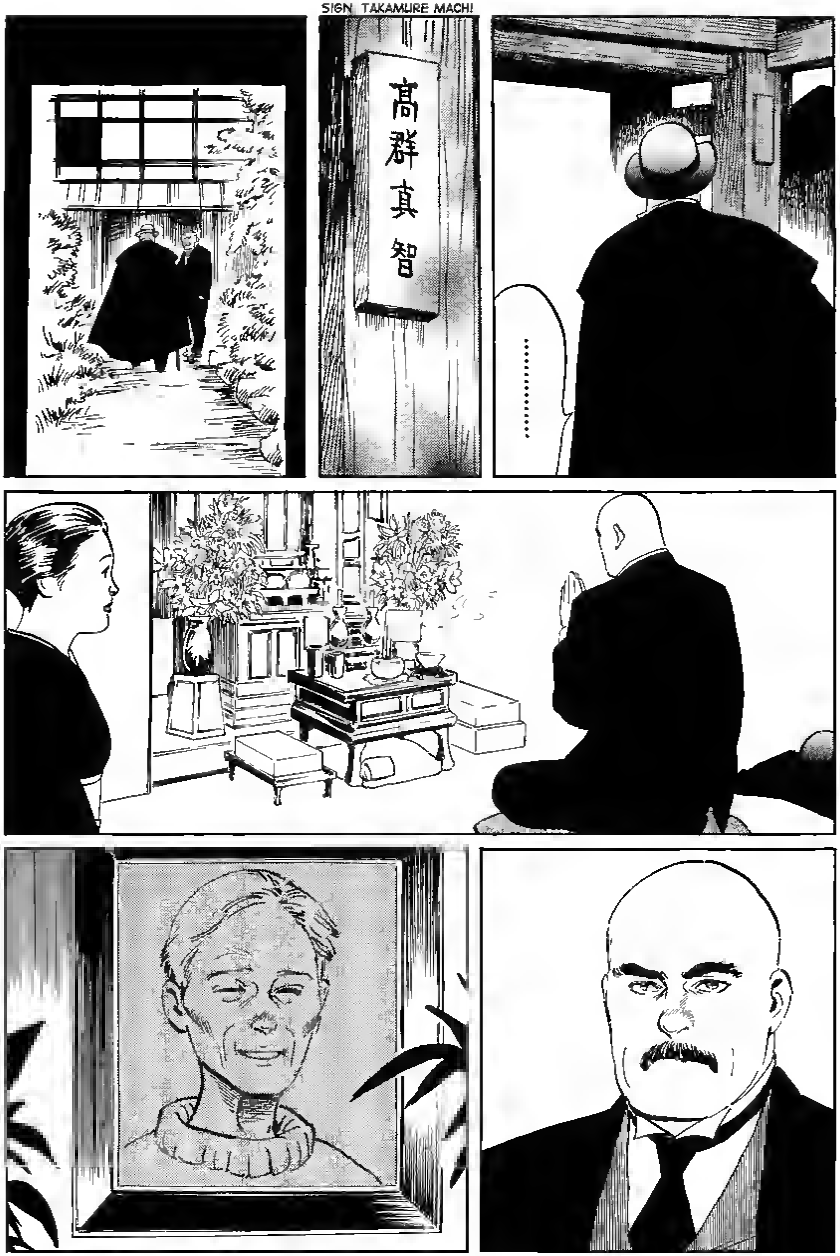
TRANSLATED BY SYSTEMATICCHAOS
PROOFREADING BY DESTROYERRING
EDITING BY HIGHTIDE
QC BY KAZUHIKO

File 32:
Had I Known I Was Dreaming

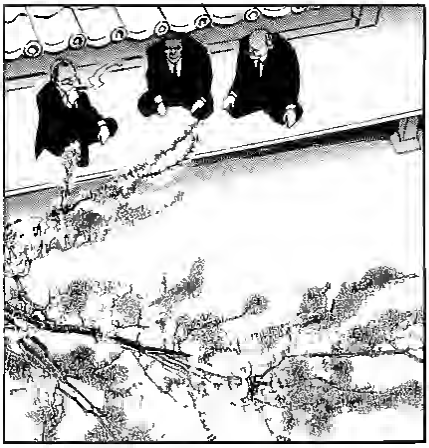


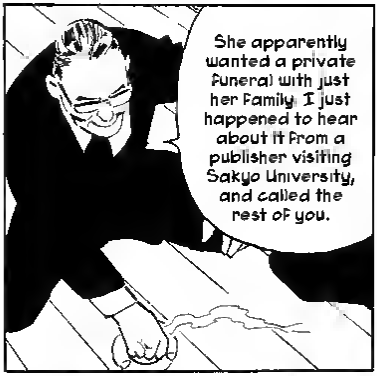


Yamashina, Kyoto

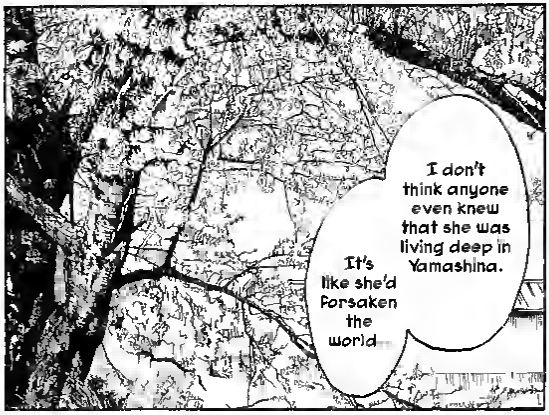

高群真智
……

Thank you for your call, Yamashita.
Long time no see, Munakata!



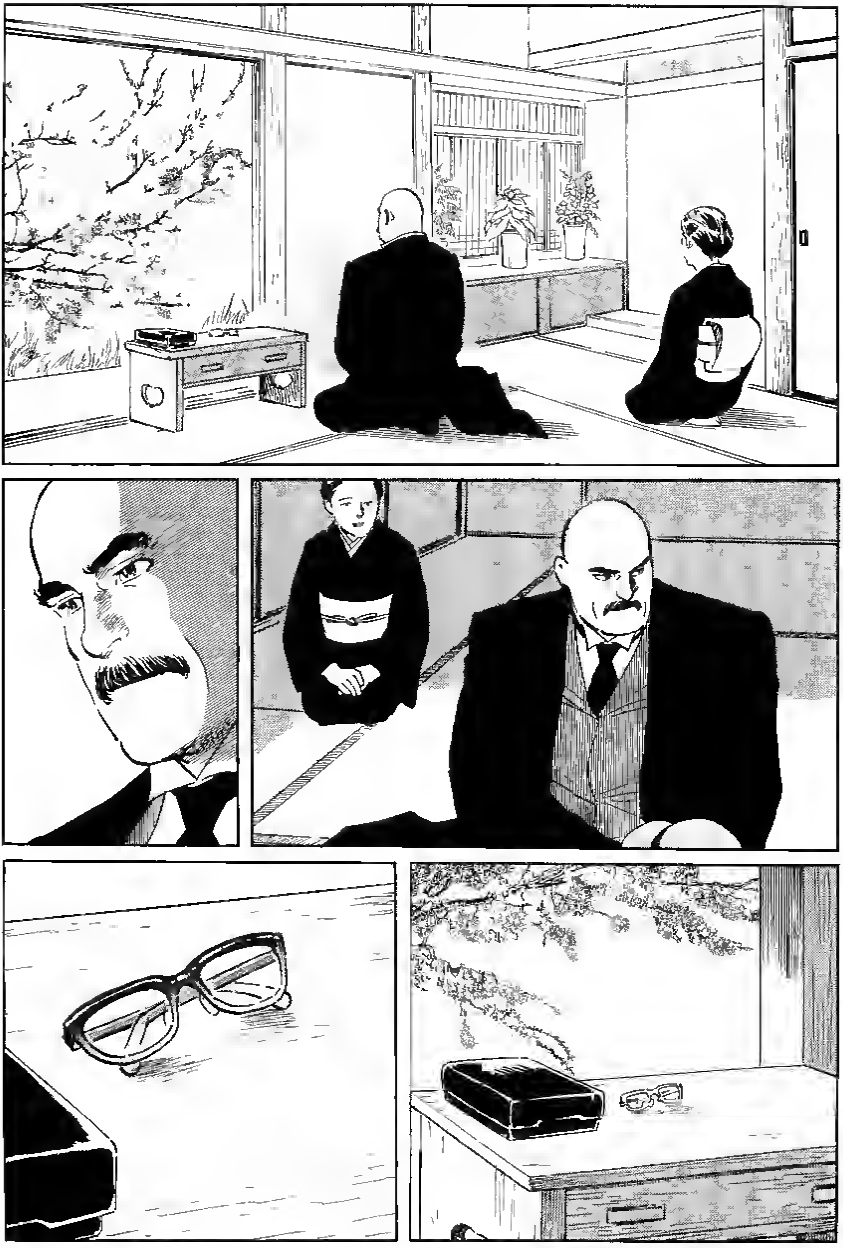

She apparently wanted a private funeral with just her family. I just happened to hear about it from a publisher visiting Sakyo University, and called the rest of you.

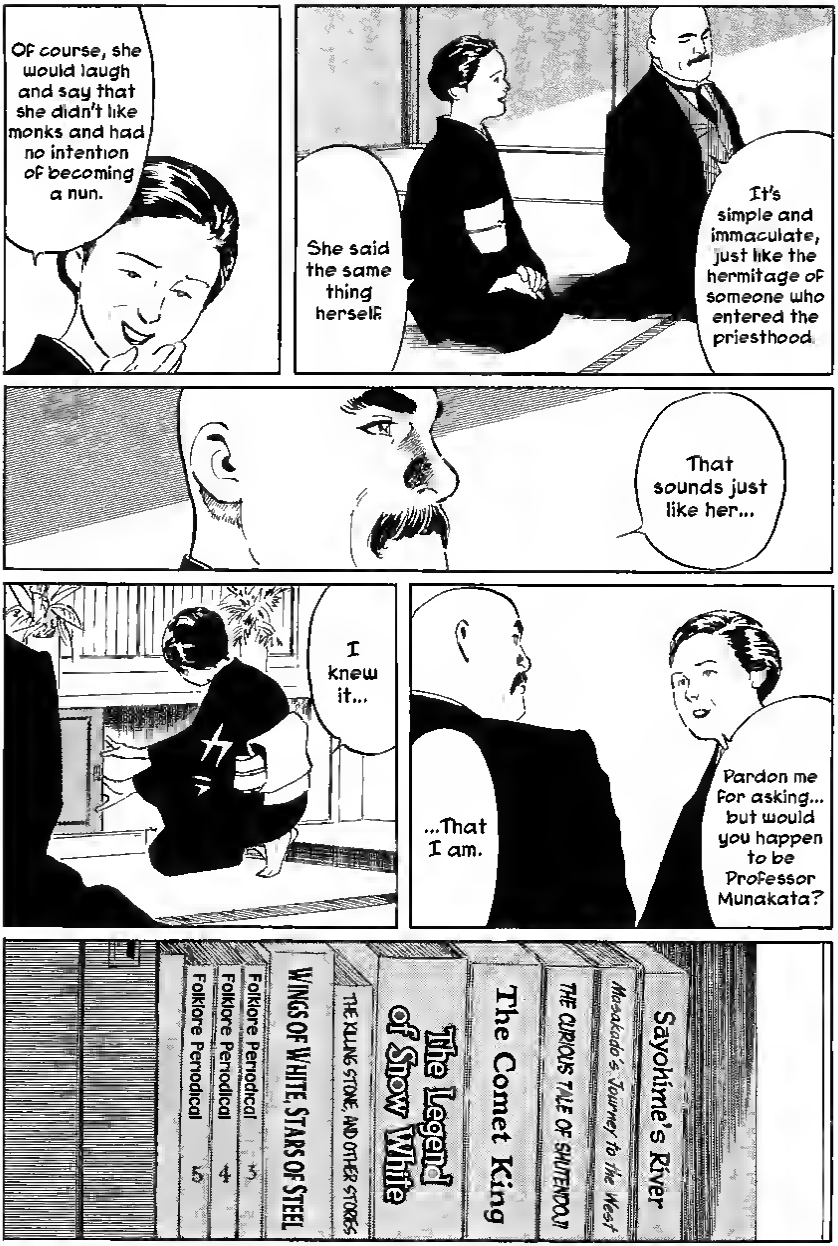
So these are all her school friends that came...


I don't think anyone even knew that she was living deep in Yamashina.
It's like she'd forsaken the world...

Boy, was she pretty! She was so dignified, though a bit unapproachable.
Back in those days, she was already a literature tutor, and quite a bit older than us... But having said so, she can't have been more than seventy.
Heart problems, huh... How old was she, anyway?
That publisher I mentioned published her thesis-like articles on rare occasions in their Kyoto-based quarterly, so she was still doing research...
Rumor has it that one assistant professor was making advances on her
But one day, she just quit her job at the university and vanished from Kyoto.
You mean "Sotoba Komachi", right? Hahaha! I'm not sure whether I would have wanted to meet her while she was alive or not...
For over thirty years, too! And look at how old we all are now. I guess it's true, all things are transitory, all form is emptiness, and even "Komachi" grew old and died.

I'm her niece. My aunt was single... Go right ahead.
Oh, don't mind us, Miss. We only came to burn some incense for your mother. We'll be on our way soon.
Oh, so she never married...
I would like... to take a look inside her room.
Huh?
Before I go, may I ask you a bit of a brazen favor?

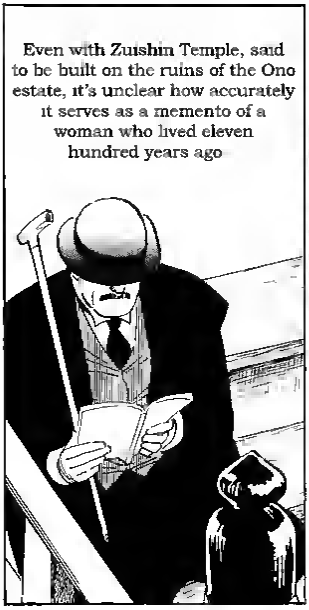


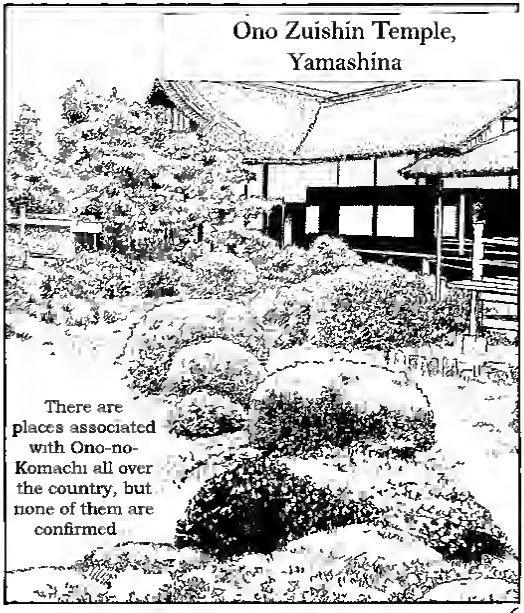

It's simple and immaculate, just like the hermitage of someone who entered the priesthood.
She said the same thing herself.
Of course, she would laugh and say that she didn't like monks and had no intention of becoming a nun.
That sounds just like her...
Pardon me for asking... but would you happen to be Professor Munakata?
...That I am.
I knew it...
Sayohime's River
Masakado's Journey to the West
THE CURIOUS TALE OF SHUTENDOJI
The Comet King
The Legend of Snow White
THE KILLING STONE, AND OTHER STORIES
WINGS OF WHITE, STARS OF STEEL
Folklore Periodical 3
Folklore Periodical 4
Folklore Periodical 5

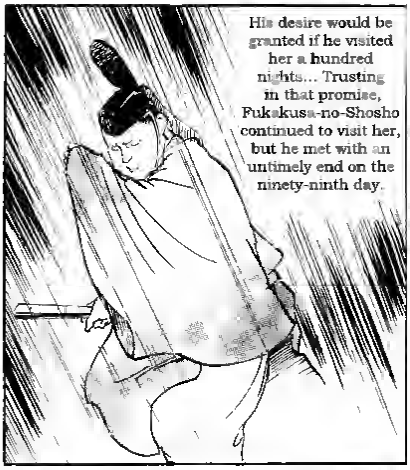
She refused to leave the house for the past few years, so she would often ask me to buy books for her.
She would read your books and periodicals with your theses with a smile.
Machi was like a teacher to me.
I see...
It was Machi that taught me how to think freely about Folkloristics, and my perspective on history.
That was thirty years ago...

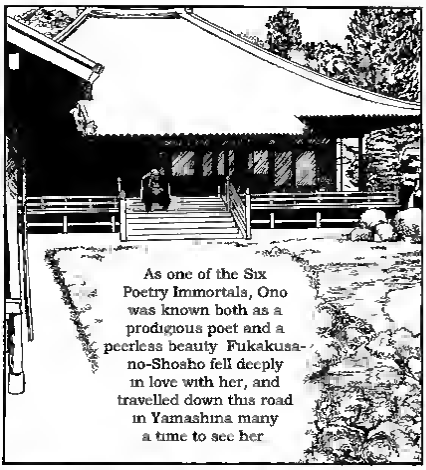
She would write articles for that periodical under a pen name...
DYNASTY QUARTERLY
Here... She asked me to give this to you as a memento, if I were to ever meet you.
Speaking of Ono-no-Komachi, doesn't the Yamashina area have deep ties to that legend...?
There's a temple called Zuishin Temple just within walking distance from here. They say it was built on the ruins of Komachi's estate.
My aunt would also take strolls to all the other places in Kyoto that are associated with Komachi..
Thoughts on the Legend of Ono-no-Komachi
Yamashina Hanae
2)

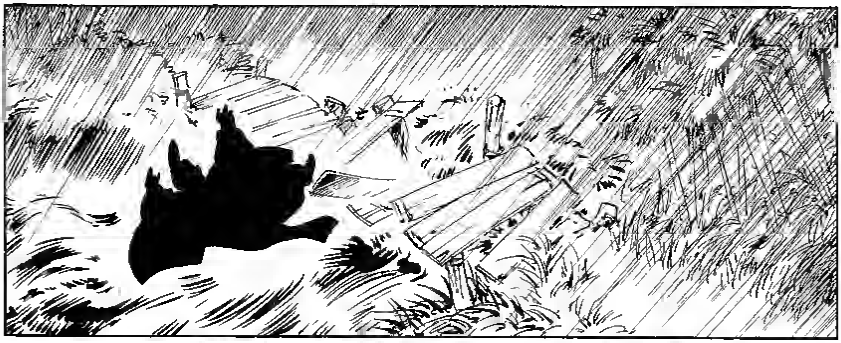
THE FLOWER COLORS
WILTED AND FADED AWAY
WHILE I MEANINGLESSLY
EXISTED IN THIS WORLD
AS THE LONG LASTING RAIN CONTINUED
ONO-NO-KOMACHI
(KOKIN WAKASHU)


Even with Zuishin Temple, said to be built on the ruins of the Ono estate, it's unclear how accurately it serves as a memento of a woman who lived eleven hundred years ago

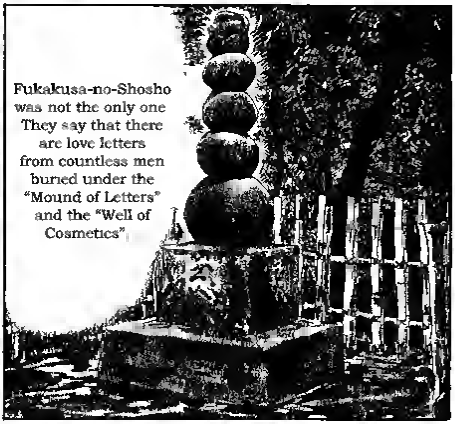

Ono Zuishin Temple, Yamashina
There are places associated with Ono-no-Komachi all over the country, but none of them are confirmed

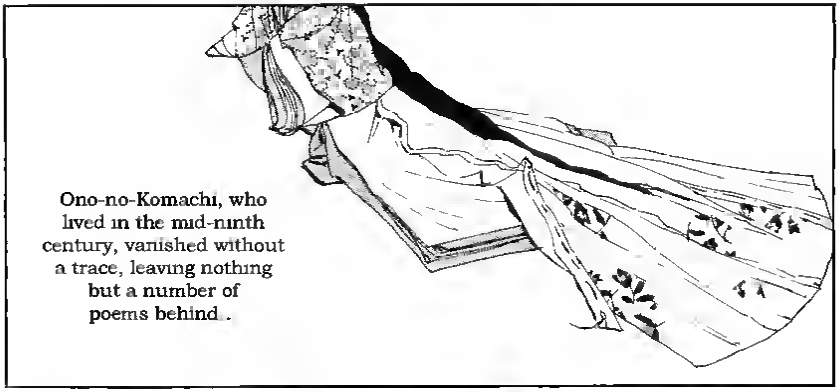

His desire would be granted if he visited her a hundred nights... Trusting in that promise, Fukakusa-no-Shosho continued to visit her, but he met with an untimely end on the ninety-ninth day.

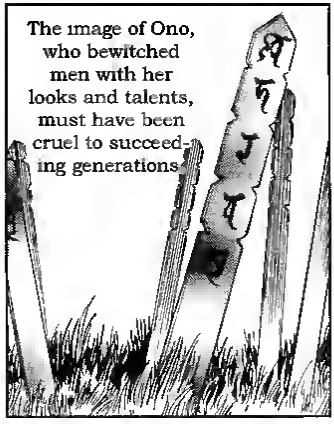

As one of the Six Poetry Immortals, Ono was known both as a prodigious poet and a peerless beauty. Fukakusa-no-Shosho fell deeply in love with her, and travelled down this road in Yamashina many a time to see her.

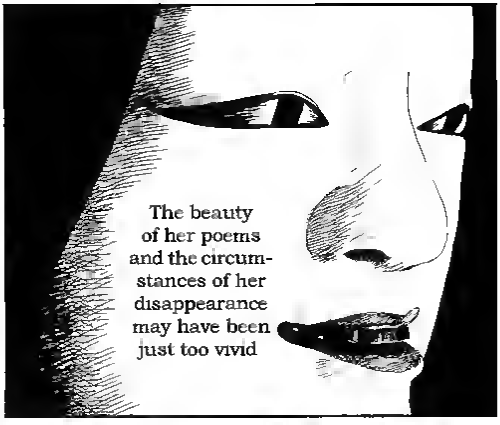


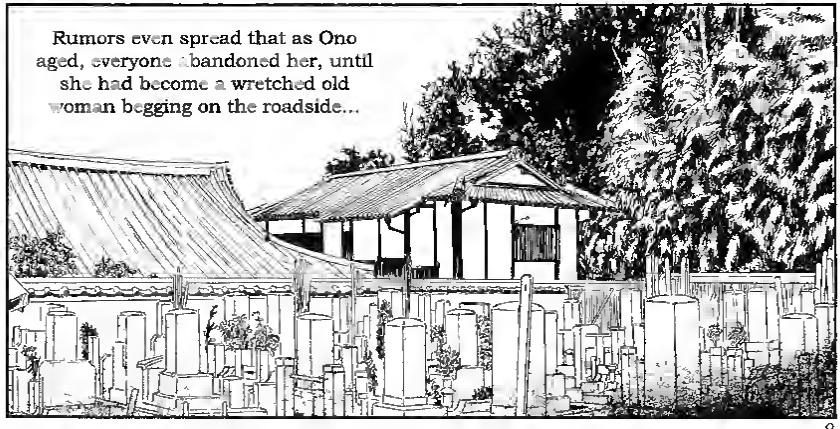
But all these legends are no more than stories fabricated and told after Ono's death


Fukakusa-no-Shosho was not the only one. They say that there are love letters from countless men buried under the "Mound of Letters" and the "Well of Cosmetics".


Ono-no-Komachi, who lived in the mid-ninth century, vanished without a trace, leaving nothing but a number of poems behind.


The image of Ono, who bewitched men with her looks and talents, must have been cruel to succeeding generations.


The beauty of her poems and the circumstances of her disappearance may have been just too vivid

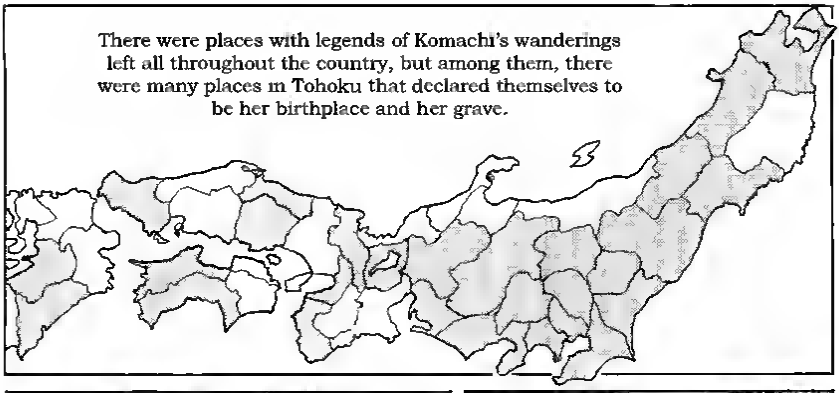

Rumors even spread that as Ono aged, everyone abandoned her, until she had become a wretched old woman begging on the roadside...

This story, with strong Buddhist themes, must have been intended to preach karma and the vanity of life, but it eventually became seen as a story of Ono-no-Komachi.

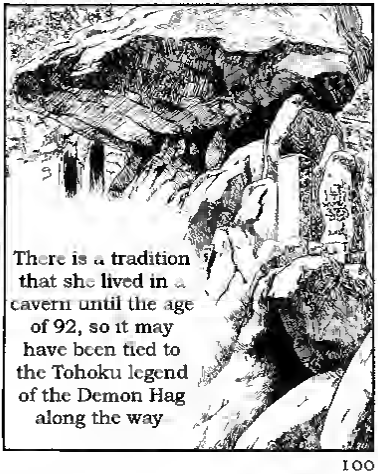
The story of the "Tamatsukuri Komachi Chronicle", thought to be written well after Ono's death, tells of a woman who once lived a life of luxury, who became decrepit with age and wandered the roads, screaming for comfort...

Based on this, other works, such as the Noh song "Sotoba Komachi", were written, and Komachi continued to wander further through these dark and gloomy legends.

There were places with legends of Komachi's wanderings left all throughout the country, but among them, there were many places in Tohoku that declared themselves to be her birthplace and her grave.



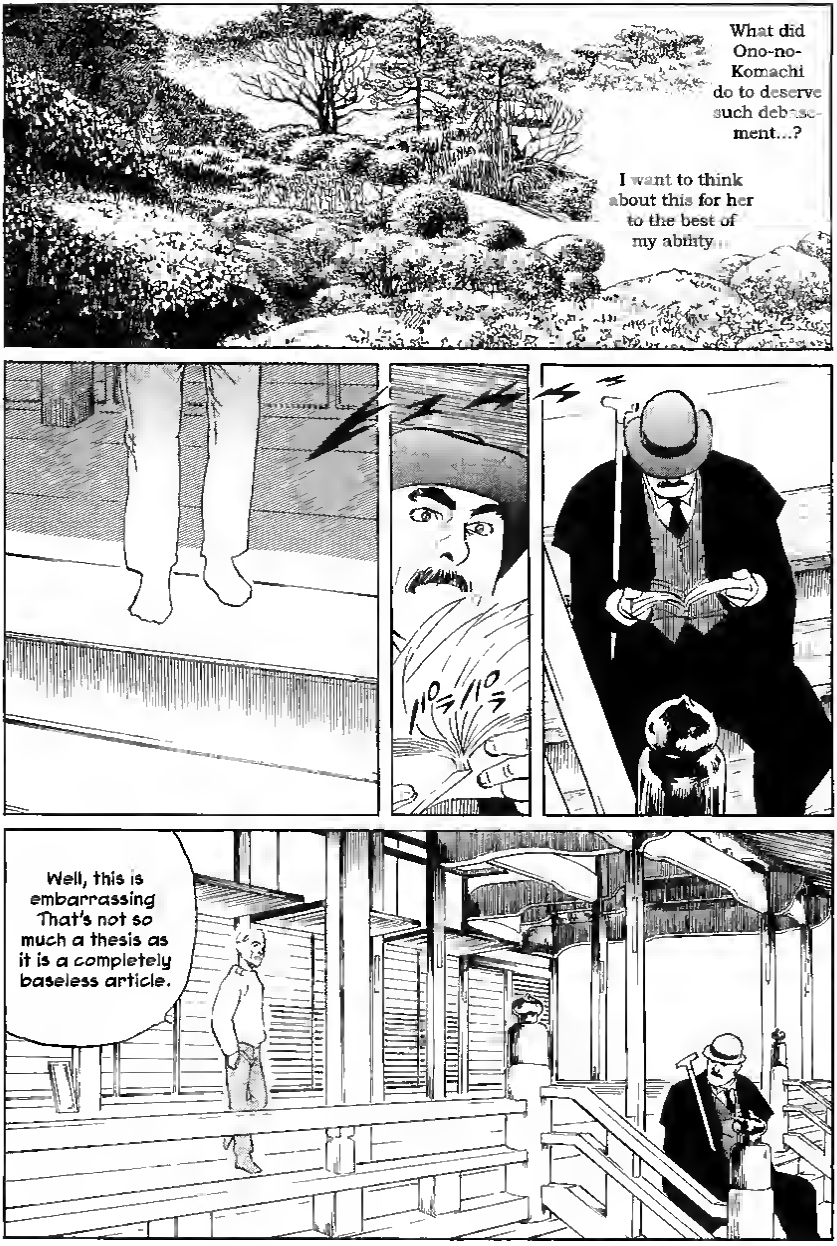
The Komachi of legend lived on, growing ever uglier and more wretched, and even was assuaged after her death...



There is a tradition that she lived in a cavern until the age of 92, so it may have been tied to the Tohoku legend of the Demon Hag along the way

They say that this was Ono-no-Komachi.
When Ariwara-no-Narihira, another of the Six Poetry Immortals, was journeying through Tohoku, he heard a voice singing a song of lament in a desolate wasteland.

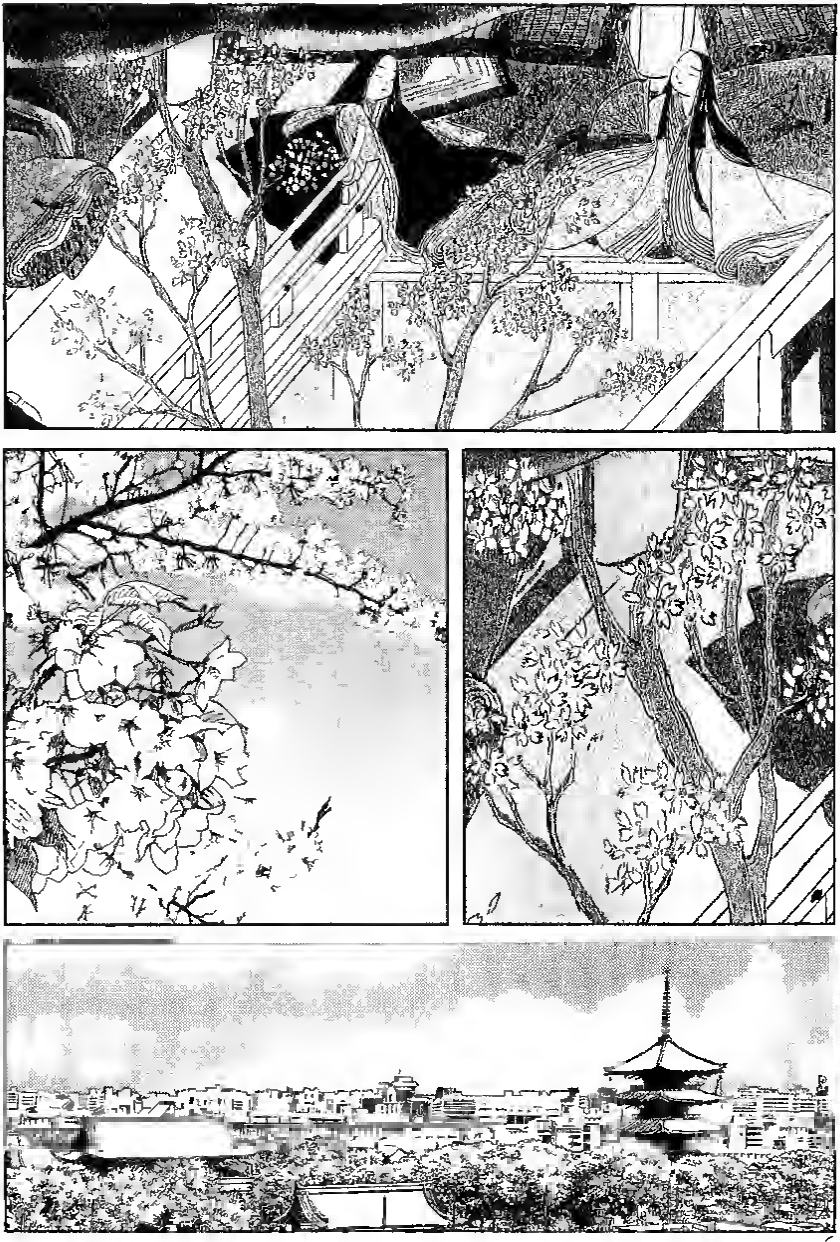
These legends practically prove themselves as fabrications. But what an obstinate sadism it must have been to ascribe them to a real woman.
As if a penance for driving Fukukusa-no-Shosho to his death, she complains of the suffering of remaining on this plane for eternity.


What did Ono-no-Komachi do to deserve such debasement...?
I want to think about this for her to the best of my ability...
Well, this is embarrassing That's not so much a thesis as it is a completely baseless article.

"Invisible passions Fade from This world's Human hearts And flowers"...
Komachi was a smart woman. She would not have chosen a life of wandering, with her aged image on full display.
Heave-ho!
Oh, my word! Hahhahha! That's an honor I don't deserve!
Did you know, Machi? Back when we were students, we secretly used to call you "Komachi".

Well, Ono-no-Komachi's unparalleled beauty was just a legend. I'll bet you anything her face was just like mine. Hahha!
You were a striking beauty, and you always overwhelmed the professors with your sharp intuition... You really were Komachi!
Oh, please! That's just going too far for an old woman like me!
And the "Kokinshu" was compiled decades after Komachi's death. Tsurayuki had never seen Komachi in person.
The one who praised her for being the reincarnation of the ancient "Sotori-hime", whose beauty was said to radiate through her clothes, was the editor of the "Kokin Wakashu", Ki-no-Tsurayuki
Her beauty was a legend? But I thought...
They may have created the image of Komachi out of their lecherous common fantasy. That's what I think, anyway.
She probably just assumed that she was a striking beauty based on her sensuous poems. The editors were all dirty old men, after all.

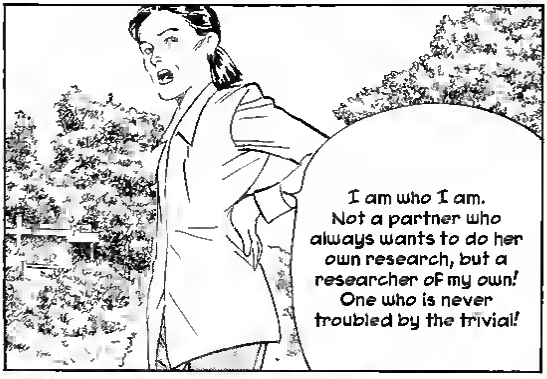
The age had already shifted from the nobles' administration to the society of bloodthirsty warriors.. The women of the dynastic period may have already been a romance of the distant past by then.
What's so funny?
Oh, nothing... So what you're saying is that she's a woman of dreams?
You're as logical as ever, Munakata...



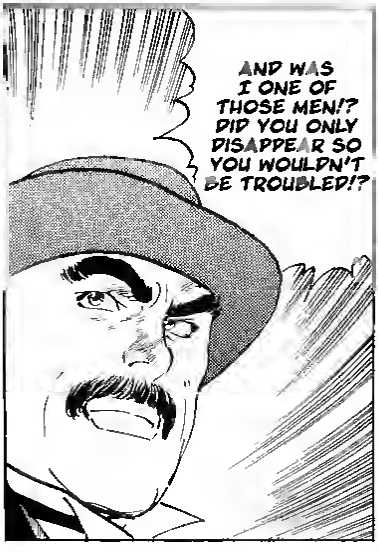
Komachi Temple,
Sakyo Ward,
Kyoto City
You have no idea... how I searched all over Tokyo for you when I was young.
Why did you leave us, Machi?
I'm glad you didn't die in the process. I hope you got married, didn't you?
Just like Fukuku-sa-no-Shosho? Hehehe...

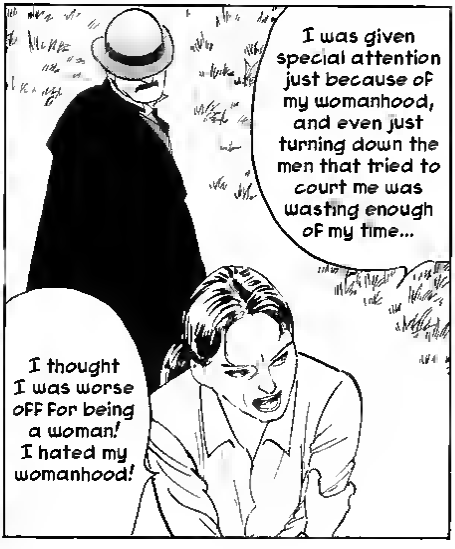
But just like my daughter's room after she passed away, I must've left my memories of those days untouched in my heart...
The days I spoke to you so passionately are long in the past.
I'm a widower now, just like I look.
Your beauty and talent were dazzling. I was entranced from the bottom of my heart...
Those were good days. Your vibrant senses and your perspective of re-evaluating history shocked me on a daily basis, and honed my thinking.
I knew that you would become a researcher with your own unique perspective... You would become someone who would do bigger jobs than me...
I knew...
...No! I...

If... If you would have been my wife, I could have been more...
I don't believe in regretting anything in my life, but there's one thing I think about from time to time.

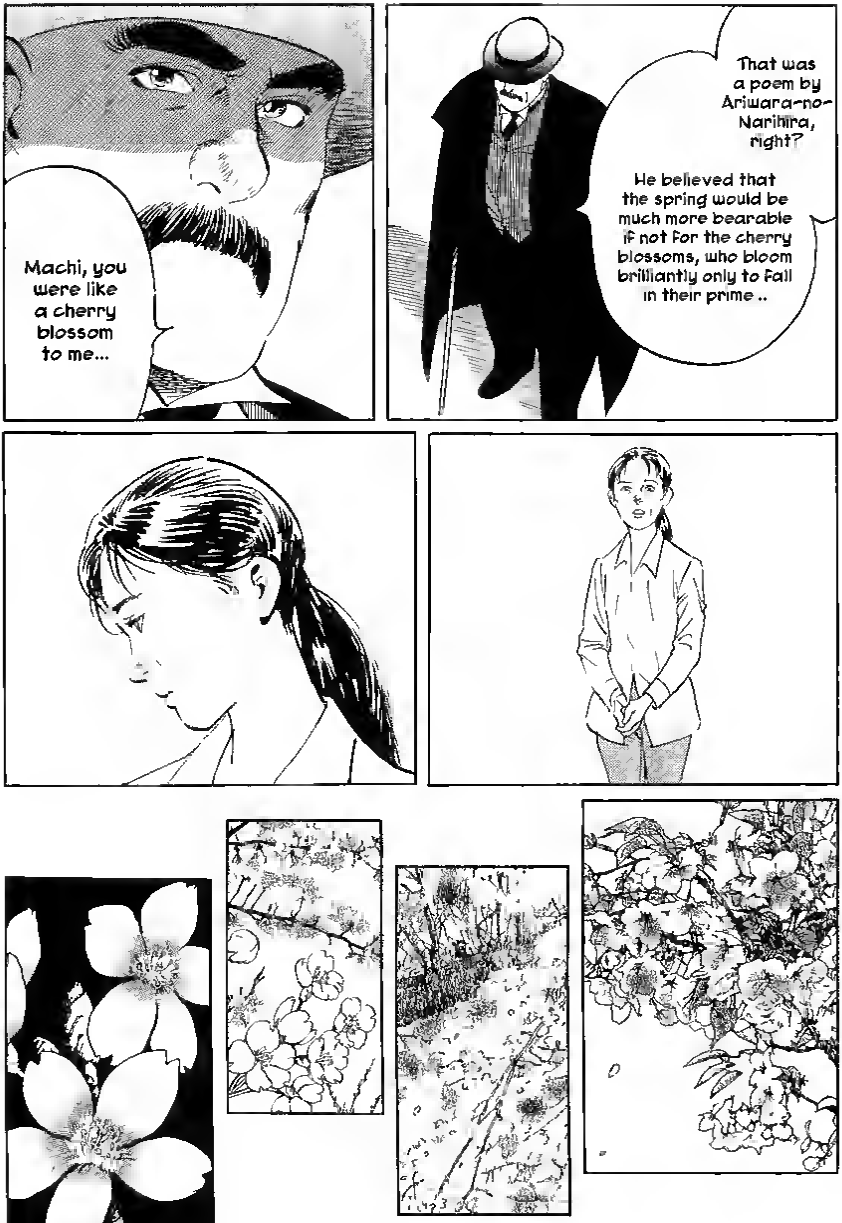

I am who I am. Not a partner who always wants to do her own research, but a researcher of my own! One who is never troubled by the trivial!

You shouldn't think about that!

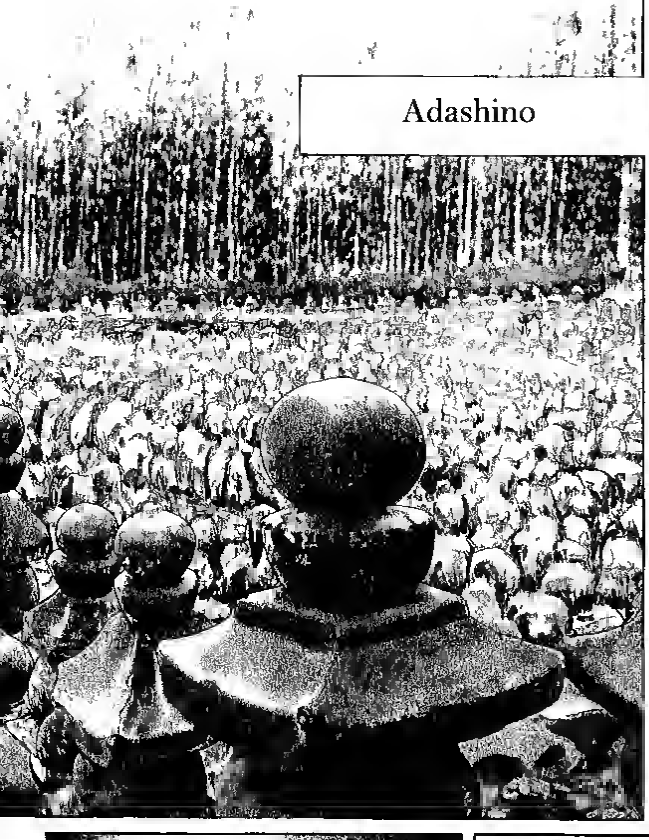

AND WAS I ONE OF THOSE MEN!? DID YOU ONLY DISAPPEAR SO YOU WOULDN'T BE TROUBLED!?


I was given special attention just because of my womanhood, and even just turning down the men that tried to court me was wasting enough of my time...
I thought I was worse off for being a woman! I hated my womanhood!

Did you hate me for leaving without a word?
Were you angry?
To draw an analogy, the men whom Ono-no-Komachi gave the cold shoulder must have hated her. The greatest hate springs from the greatest love.
She drew forth the curiosity of men without becoming anyone's wife, then vanished without a trace... No wonder that unfocused anger would cause them to create those malicious legends.
"Ah, if in this world there were only no such thing as cherry blossoms-- then perhaps in the springtime our hearts could be at peace."


Machi, you were like a cherry blossom to me...
That was a poem by Ariwara-no-Narihira, right?
He believed that the spring would be much more bearable if not for the cherry blossoms, who bloom brilliantly only to fall in their prime ..

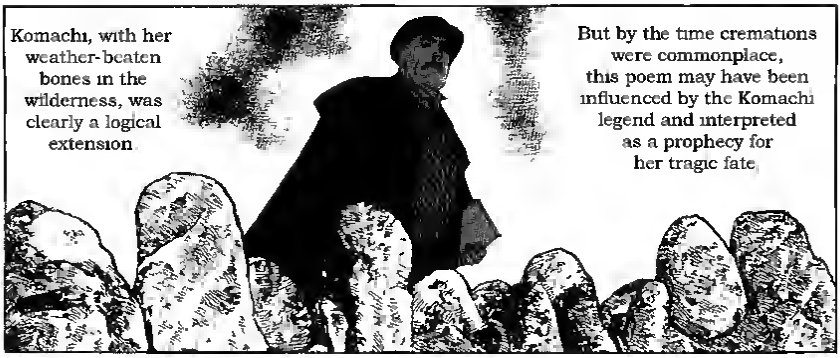
Adashino

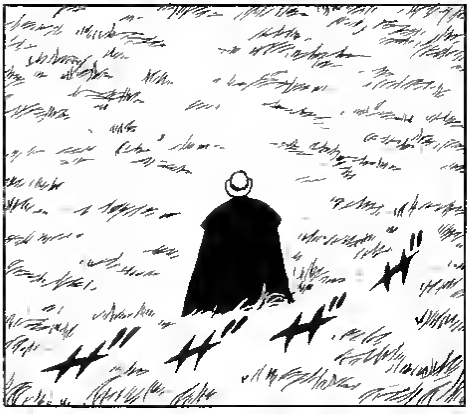


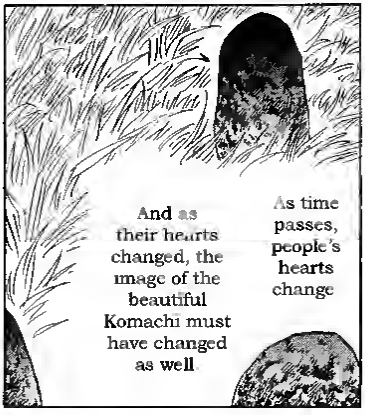
How sad,
to think I will end
as only
a pale green mist
drifting the far
fields

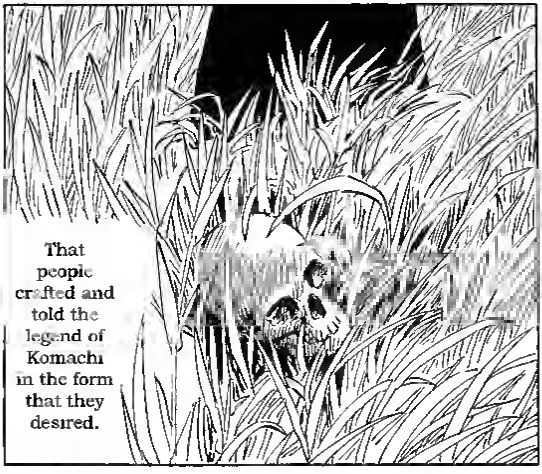
The rotting corpses were ravaged by beasts, and the overgrown grass covered the scattered bones... This was the fate of all.

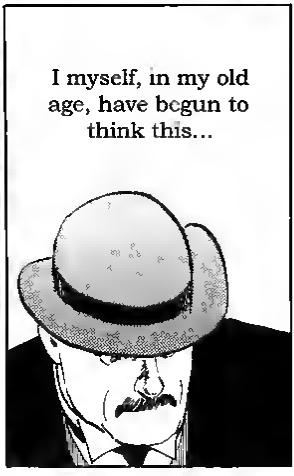
Cremations were still infrequent in the ninth century, and most of the dead were taken out into the fields and left there...


Komachi, with her weather-beaten bones in the wilderness, was clearly a logical extension
But by the time cremations were commonplace, this poem may have been influenced by the Komachi legend and interpreted as a prophecy for her tragic fate



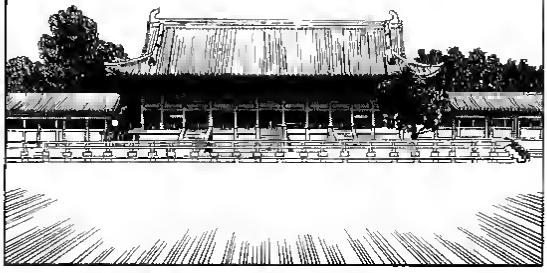

And as their hearts changed, the image of the beautiful Komachi must have changed as well
As time passes, people's hearts change


That people crafted and told the legend of Komachi in the form that they desired.


I myself, in my old age, have begun to think this...

But when stripped of their garments, heavenly maidens, too, fall to Earth and lose their beauty, becoming old beggars

The Komachi of the distant Dynastic Period, colored with radiant beauty and talent, was as unreachable as a heavenly maiden

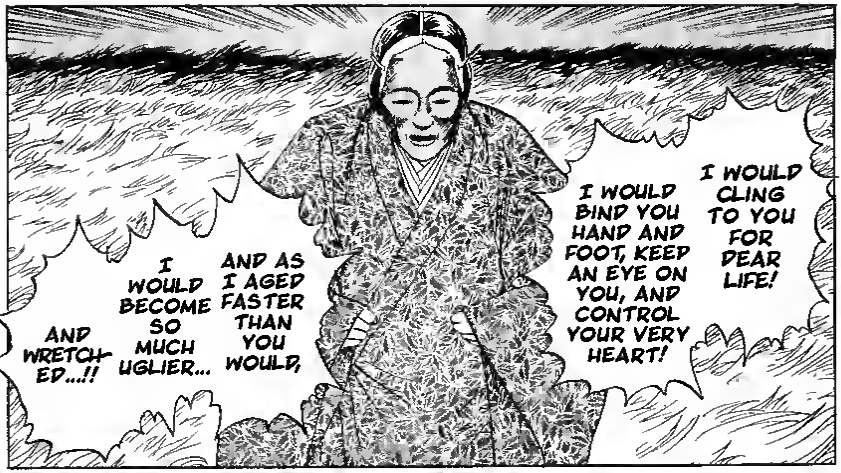


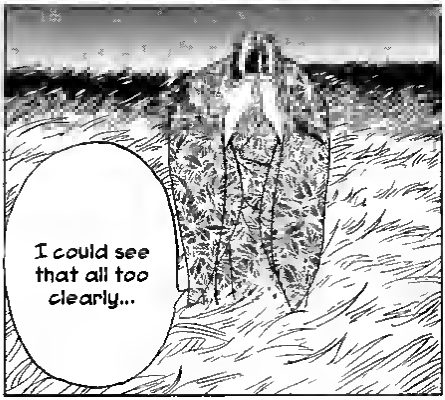
Then for the first time, Komachi became a sympathetic, flesh-and-blood woman, and people came to cry over her tragedy

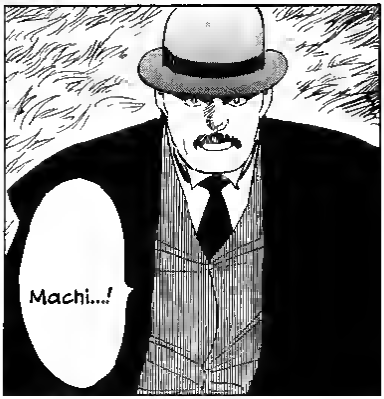
The heavenly maiden that left behind such graphic and elegant poetry was dragged down to Earth and debased by others

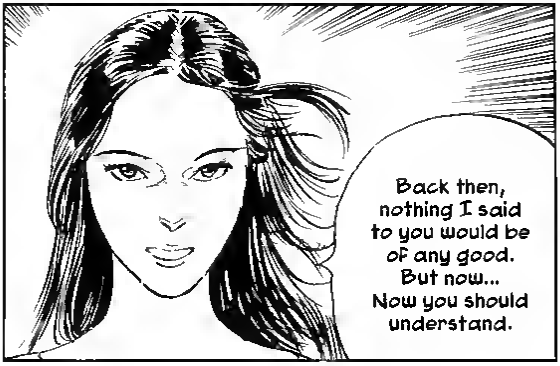
I loved you, too...

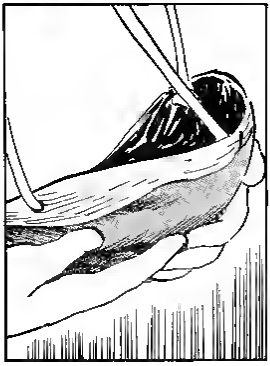
I was a woman!
I enjoyed being able to trifle with you in your youth with my every word and deed...
I knew how you felt... It's all too easy to know how a man twelve years my junior feels!
AND AS MUCH AS I HATED MY WOMANHOOD, I BECAME A WOMAN IN LOVE!
THE DAY WOULD COME WHEN YOU WOULD NO LONGER NEED ME! BUT EVEN IF THAT DAY CAME, I WOULD NOT LEAVE YOU!
AND THERE WAS ONE MORE THING THAT I KNEW.

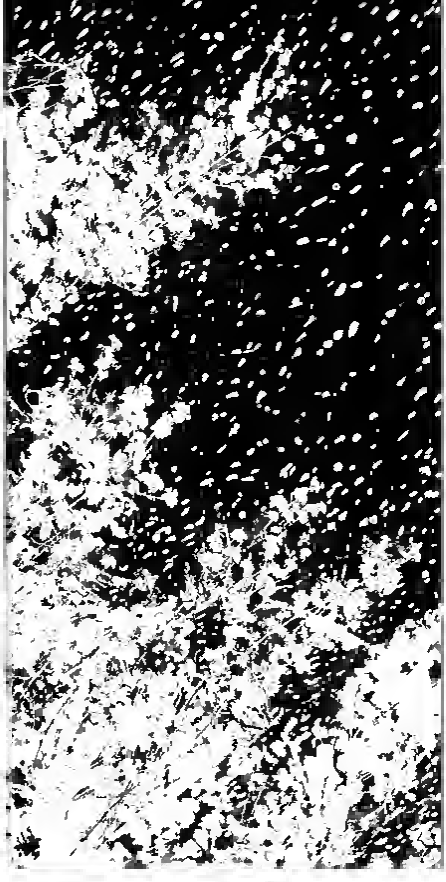

I WOULD CLING TO YOU FOR DEAR LIFE!
I WOULD BIND YOU HAND AND FOOT, KEEP AN EYE ON YOU, AND CONTROL YOUR VERY HEART!
AND AS I AGED FASTER THAN YOU WOULD,
I WOULD BECOME SO MUCH UGLIER...
AND WRETCHED...!!

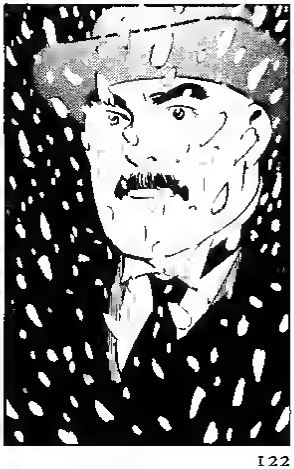

I could see that all too clearly...

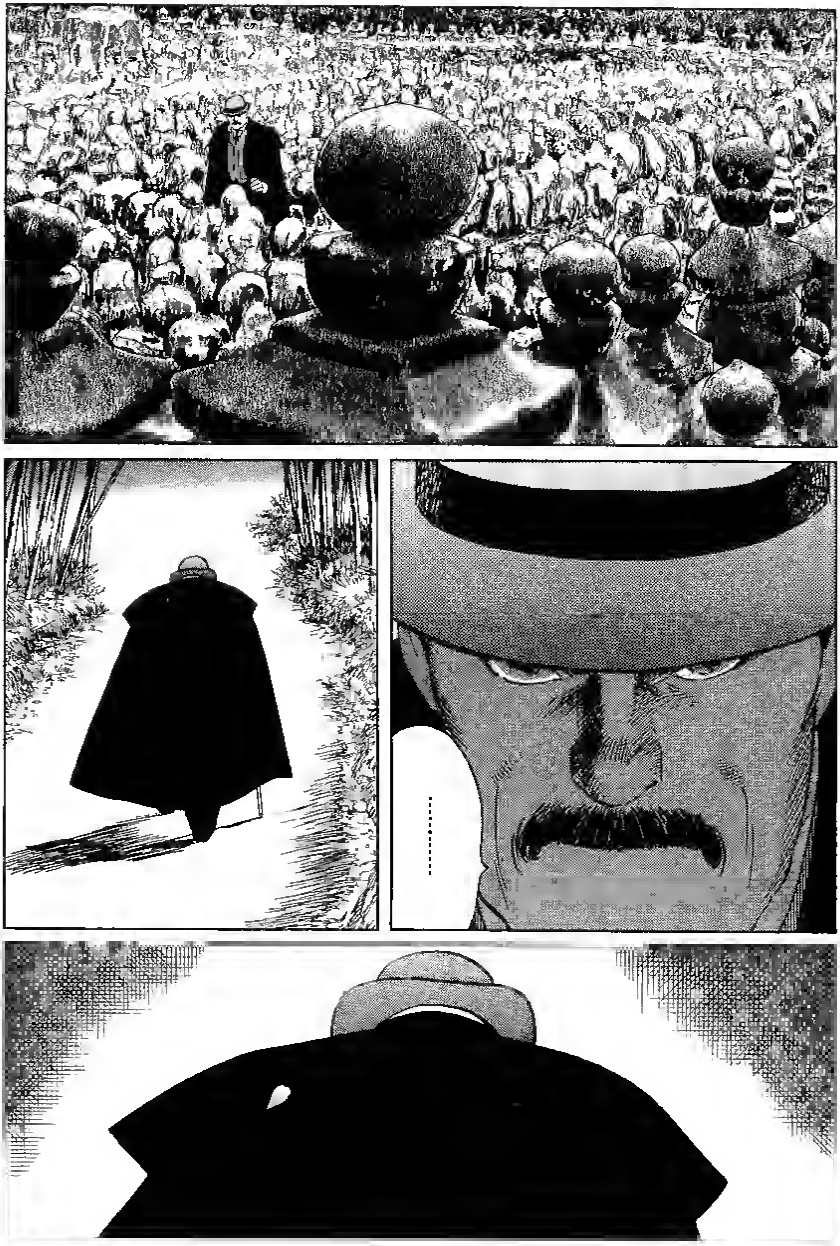

Machi...!

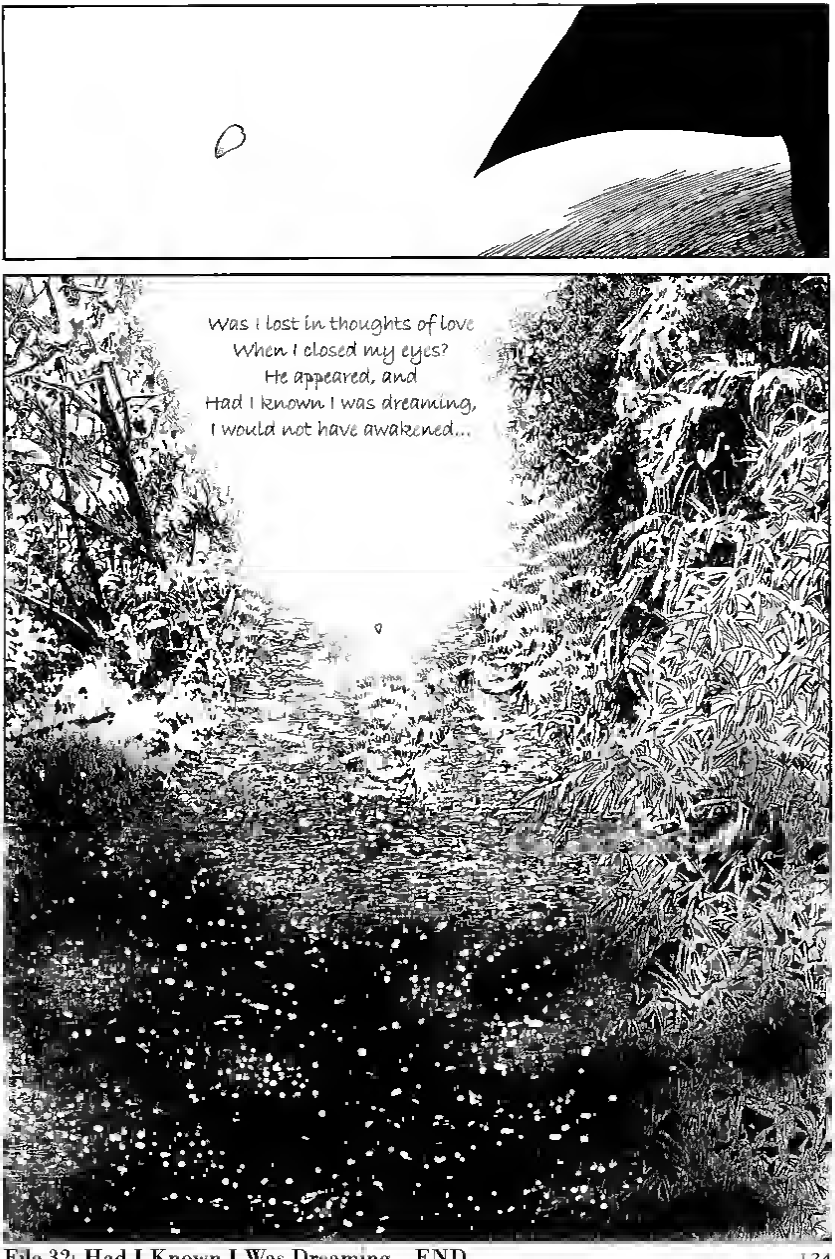

Back then, nothing I said to you would be of any good. But now... Now you should understand.









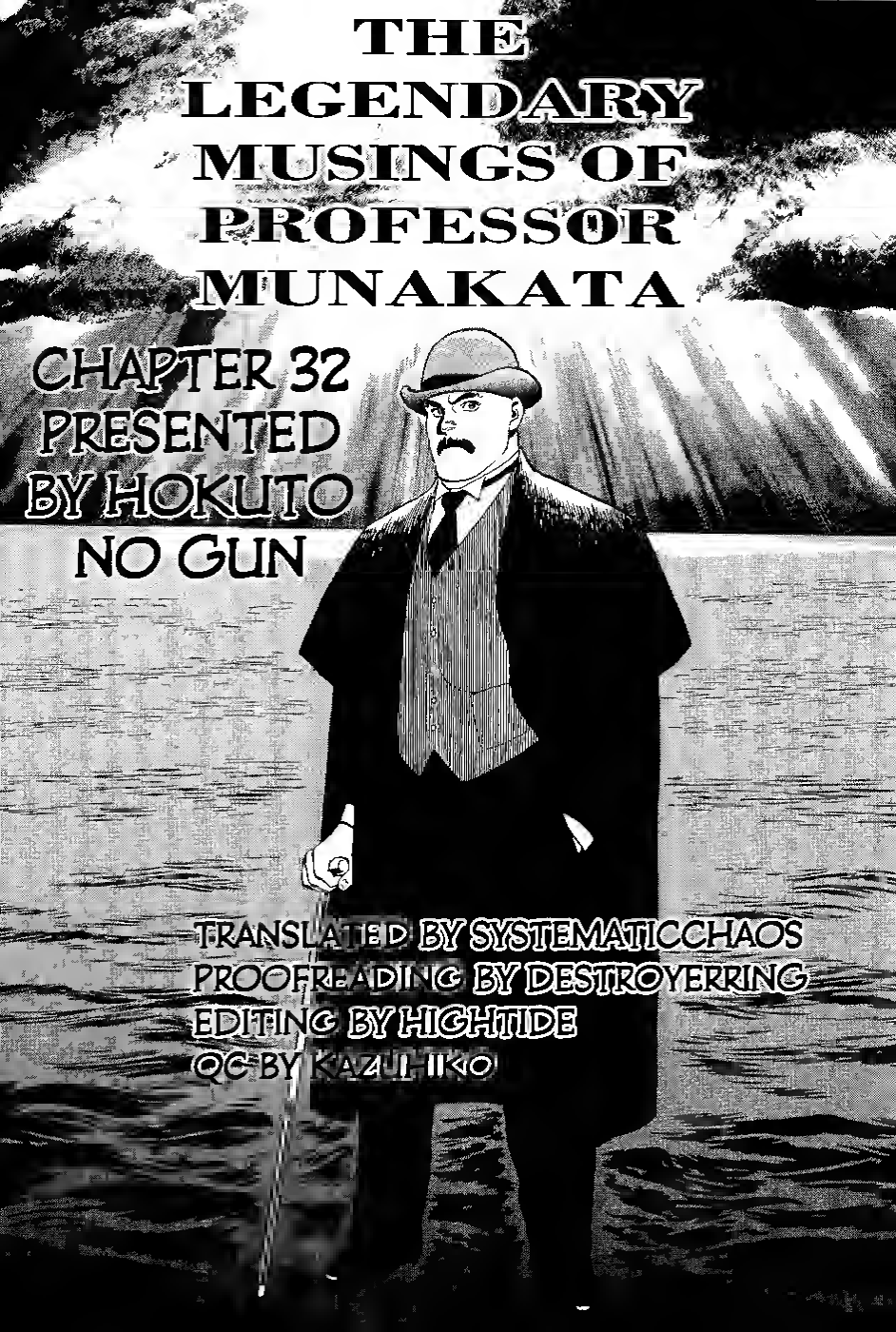


File 32: Had I Known I Was Dreaming – END

THE LEGENDARY MUSINGS OF PROFESSOR MUNAKATA

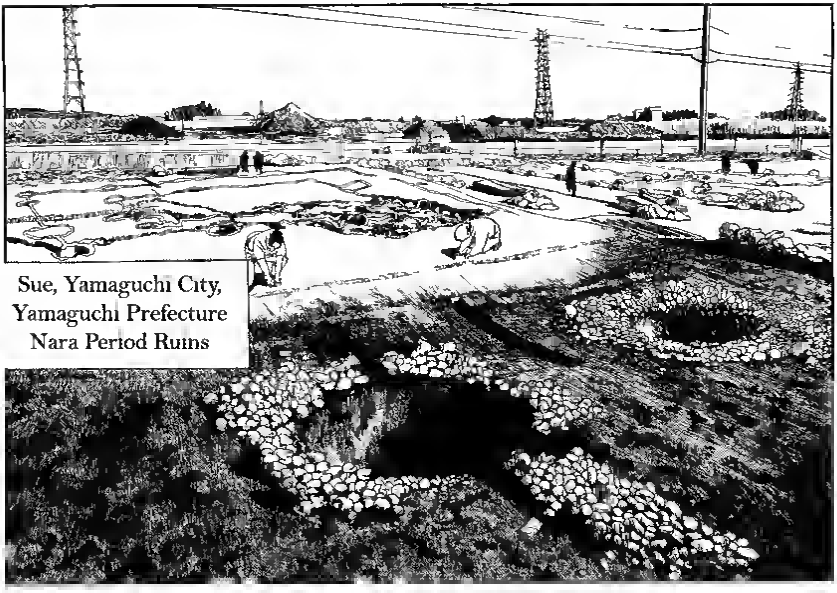
CHAPTER 32

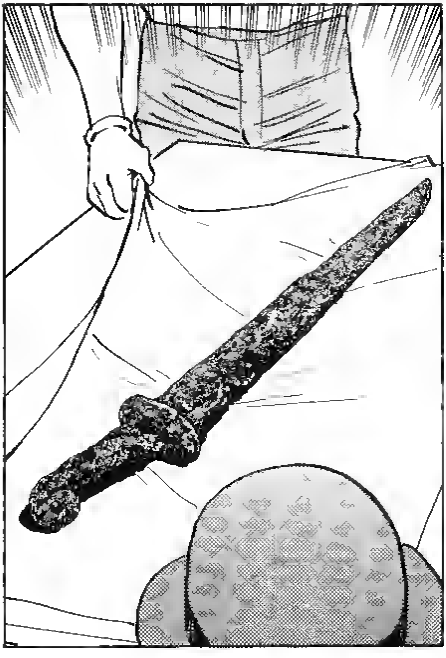
PRESENTED BY HOKUTO NO GUN

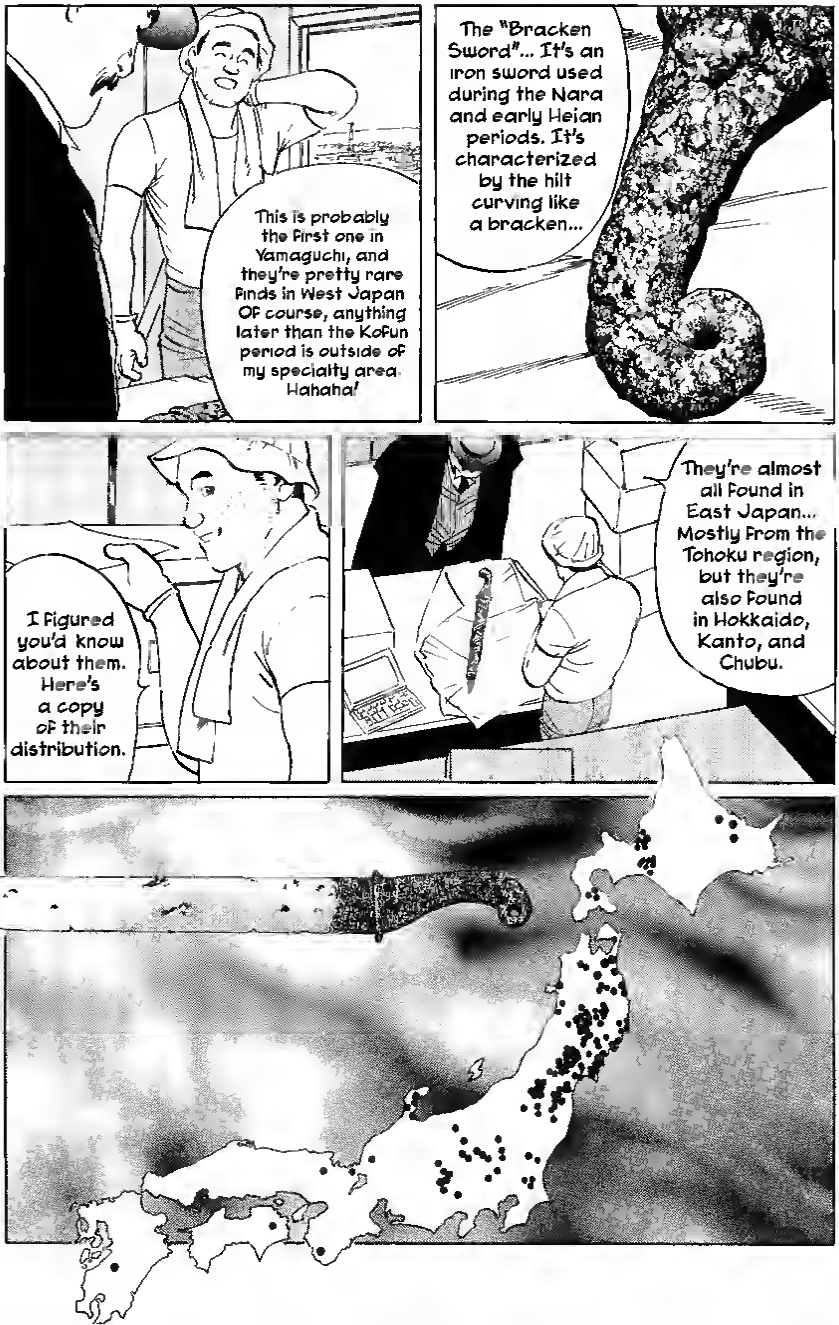


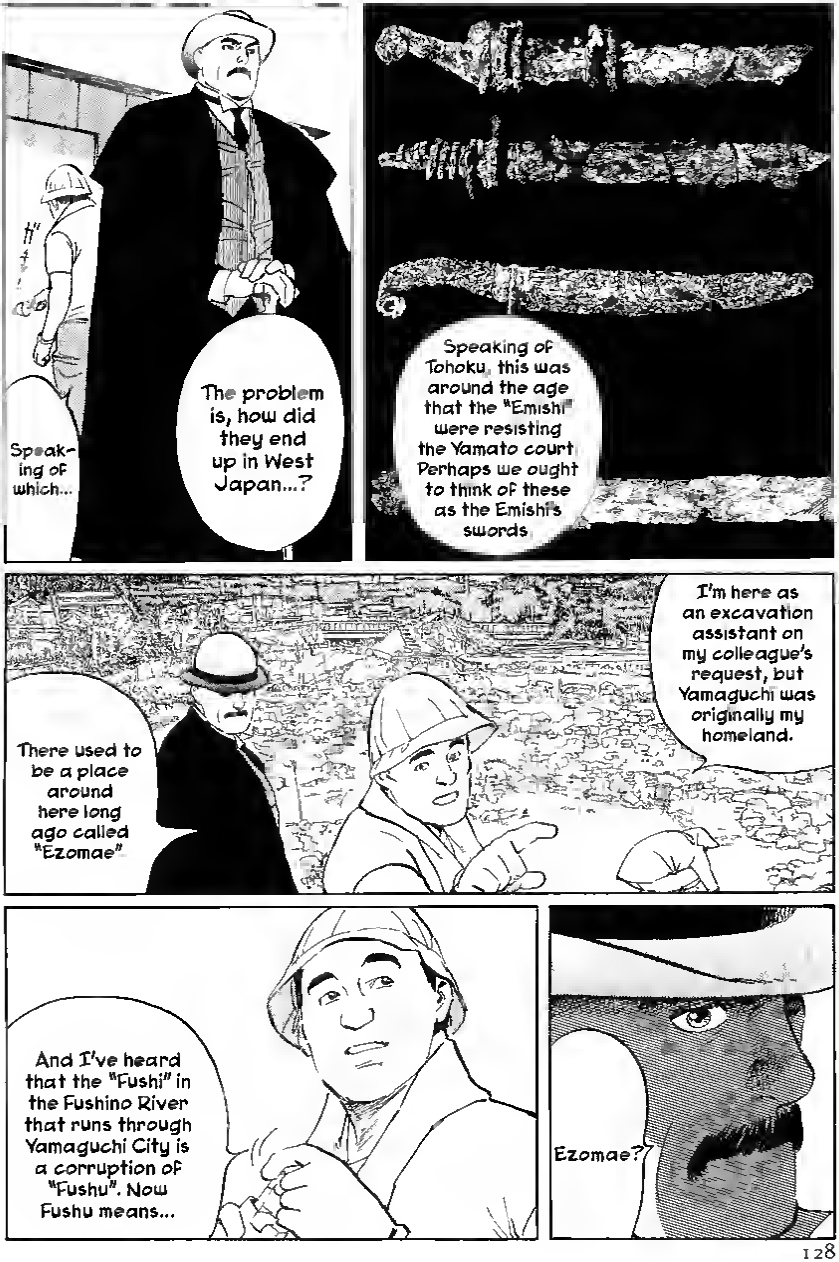
TRANSLATED BY SYSTEMATICCHAOS
PROOFREADING BY DESTROYERRING
EDITING BY HIGHTIDE
QC BY KAZUHIKO

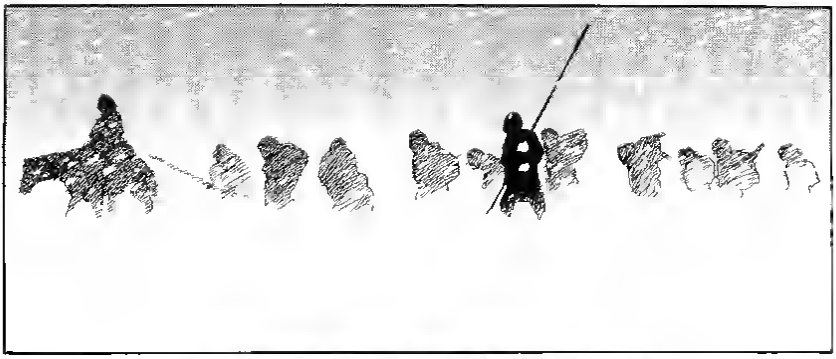
File 33: The Meteor Sword: Part One


Sue, Yamaguchi City,
Yamaguchi Prefecture
Nara Period Ruins

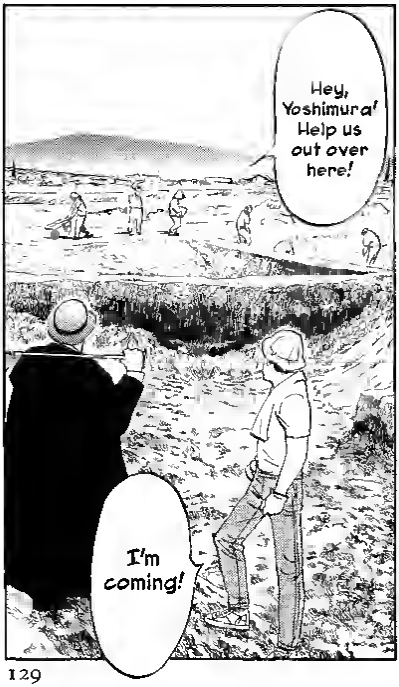


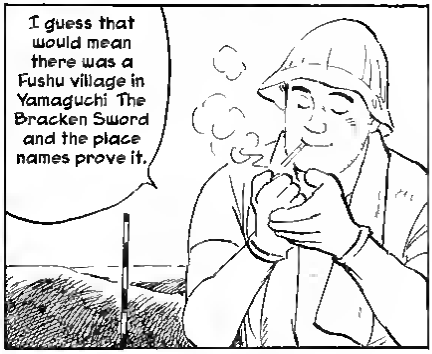

This is probably the first one in Yamaguchi, and they're pretty rare finds in West Japan. Of course, anything later than the Kofun period is outside of my specialty area. Hahaha!
The "Bracken Sword"... It's an iron sword used during the Nara and early Heian periods. It's characterized by the hilt curving like a bracken...
I figured you'd know about them. Here's a copy of their distribution.
They're almost all found in East Japan... Mostly from the Tohoku region, but they're also found in Hokkaido, Kanto, and Chubu.


Speaking of which...
The problem is, how did they end up in West Japan...?
Speaking of Tohoku, this was around the age that the "Emishi" were resisting the Yamato court. Perhaps we ought to think of these as the Emishi's swords.
There used to be a place around here long ago called "Ezomae".
I'm here as an excavation assistant on my colleague's request, but Yamaguchi was originally my homeland.
And I've heard that the "Fushi" in the Fushino River that runs through Yamaguchi City is a corruption of "Fushu". Now Fushu means...
Ezomae?

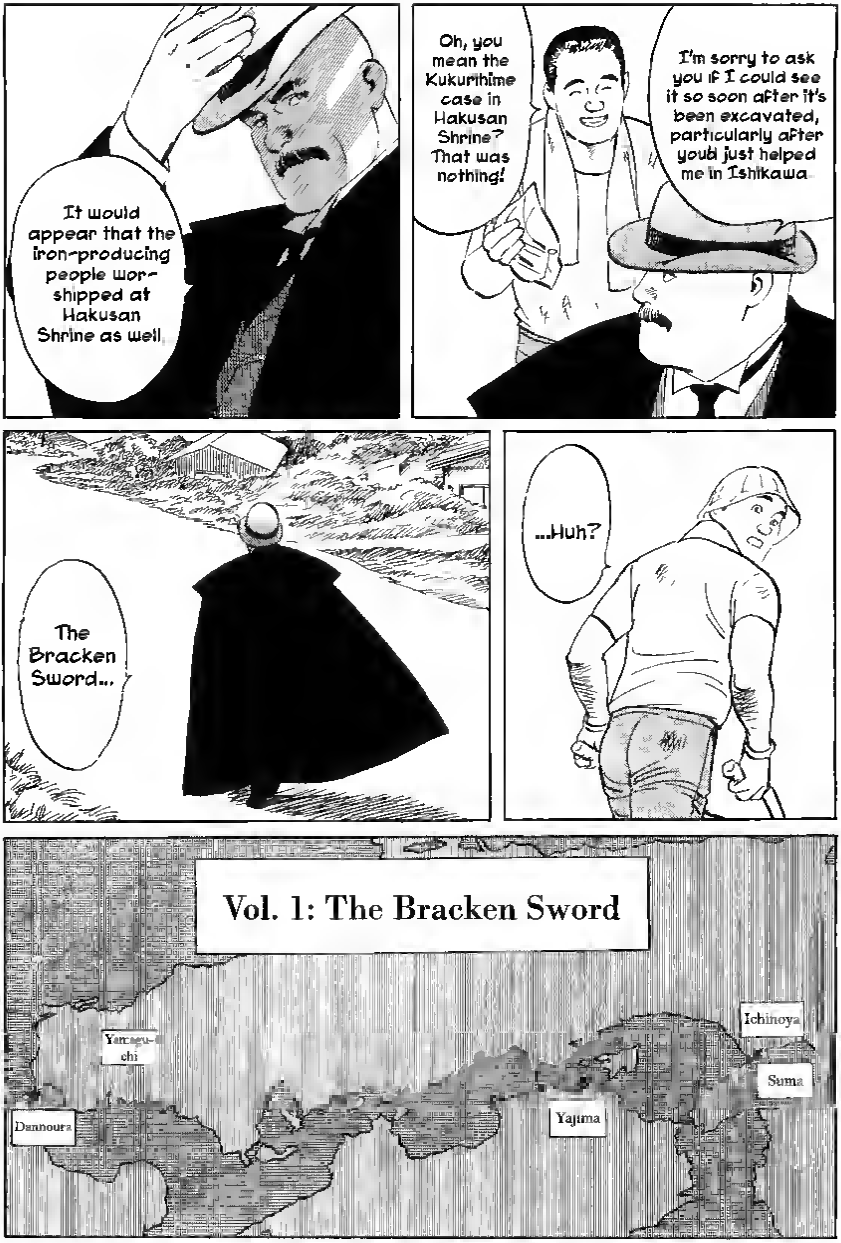


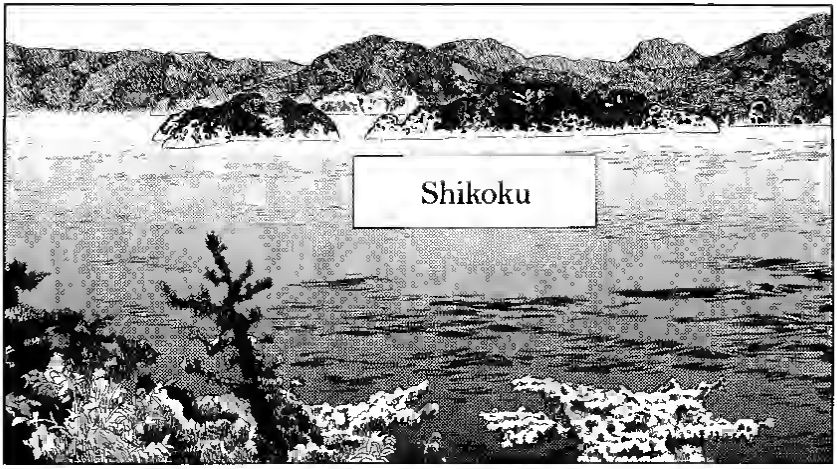
Occasionally, the Fushu were forcibly relocated across the country, leading to the creation of Fushu villages.
The Emishi. Those among them that submitted to the Court were considered a kind of prisoner and were called the Fushu or IFu.


Hey, Yoshimura! Help us out over here!
I'm coming!

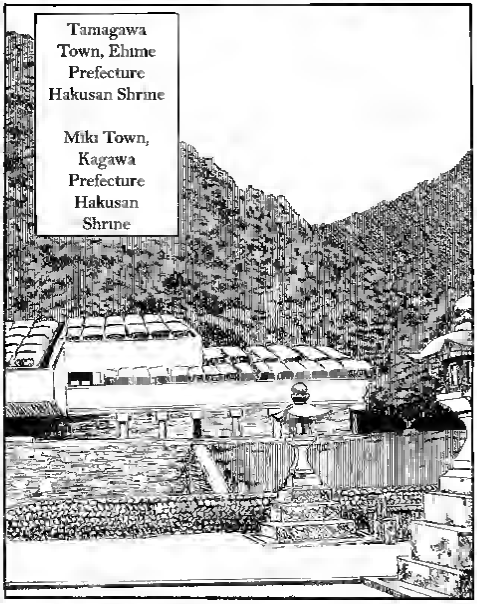

I guess that would mean there was a Fushu village in Yamaguchi. The Bracken Sword and the place names prove it.

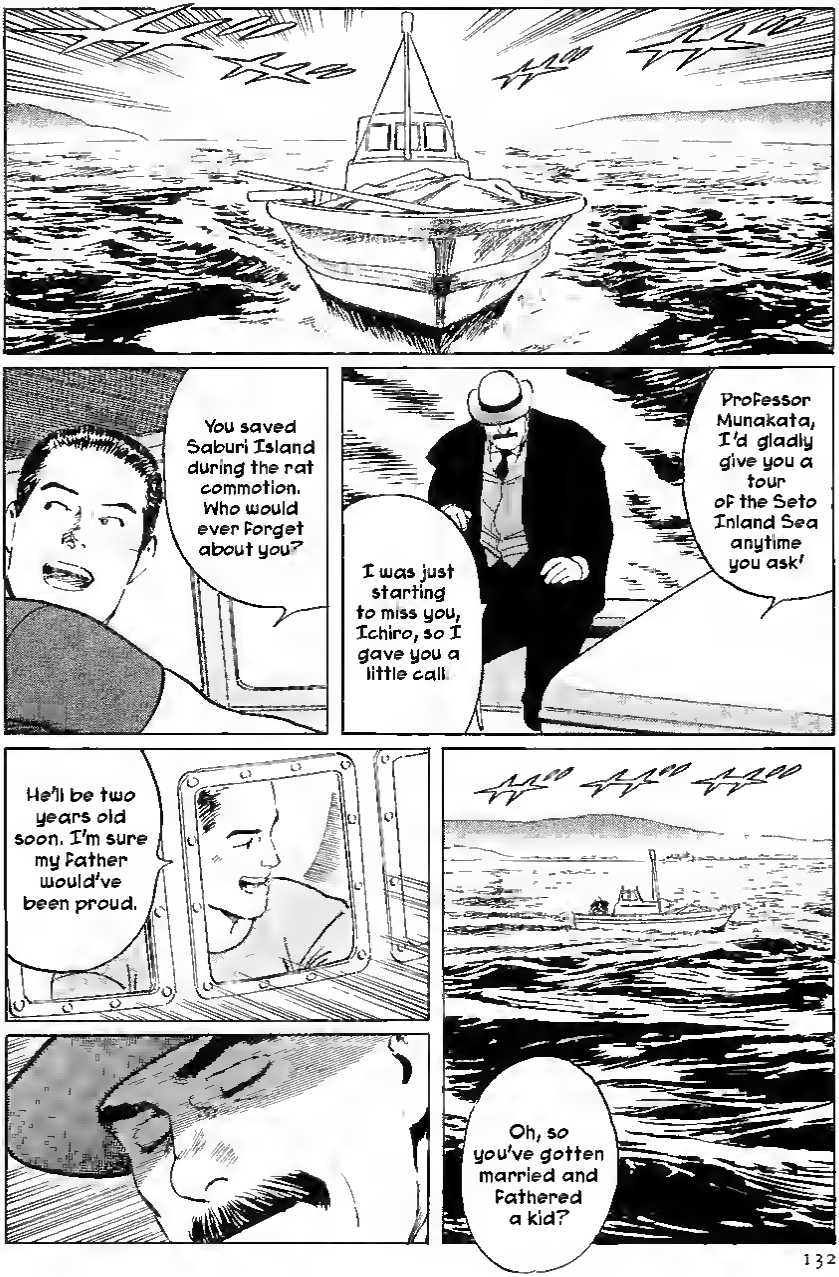
Hmm...

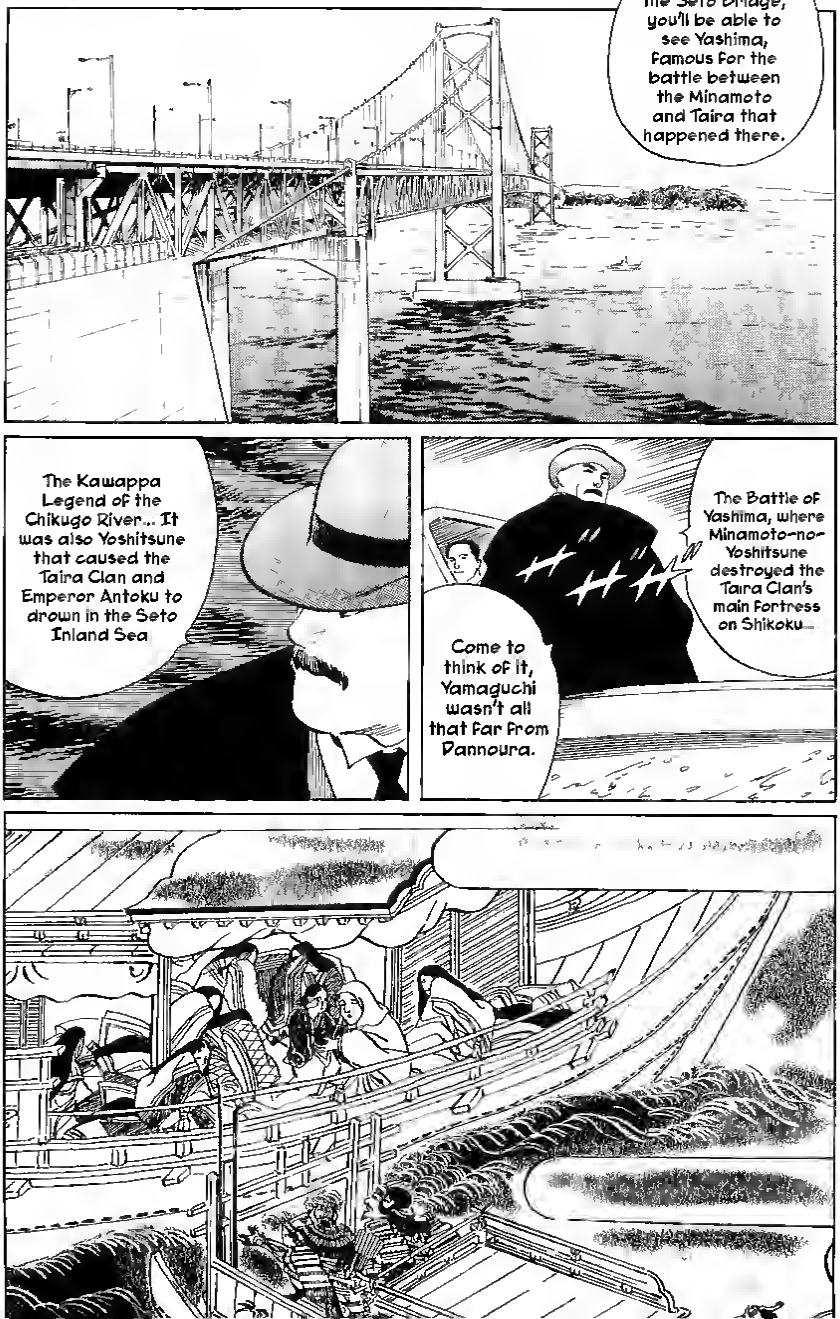

It would appear that the iron-producing people worshipped at Hakusan Shrine as well.
Oh, you mean the Kukurihime case in Hakusan Shrine? That was nothing!
I'm sorry to ask you if I could see it so soon after it's been excavated, particularly after you'd just helped me in Ishikawa.
The Bracken Sword...
...Huh?
Vol. 1: The Bracken Sword
Yamaguchi
Ichinoya
Suma
Yajima
Dannoura

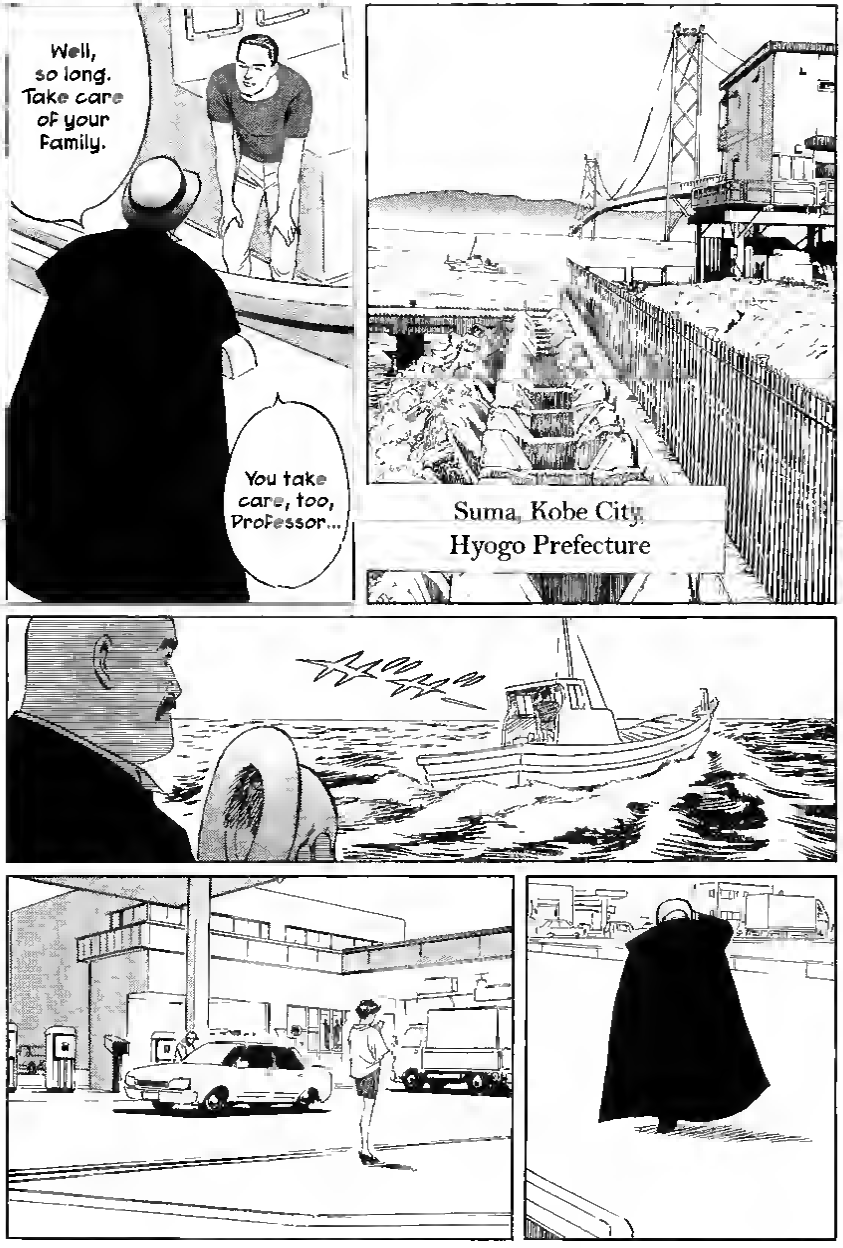

Shikoku

Tokushima Prefecture
Bracken Swords Excavated:
1


Tamagawa Town, Ehime Prefecture Hakusan Shrine
Miki Town, Kagawa Prefecture Hakusan Shrine


You saved Saburi Island during the rat commotion. Who would ever forget about you?
Professor Munakata, I'd gladly give you a tour of the Seto Inland Sea anytime you ask!
I was just starting to miss you, Ichiro, so I gave you a little call.
He'll be two years old soon. I'm sure my father would've been proud.
Oh, so you've gotten married and fathered a kid?


Once we're past the Seto Bridge, you'll be able to see Yashima, famous for the battle between the Minamoto and Taira that happened there.
The Kawappa Legend of the Chikugo River... It was also Yoshitsune that caused the Taira Clan and Emperor Antoku to drown in the Seto Inland Sea
The Battle of Yashima, where Minamoto-no-Yoshitsune destroyed the Taira Clan's main fortress on Shikoku...
Come to think of it, Yamaguchi wasn't all that far from Dannoura.


Well, so long. Take care of your family.
You take care, too, Professor...
Suma, Kobe City, Hyogo Prefecture

P-P-P... Professor Munakata... What are you...?
Well, if it isn't Miss Ike...
We'd better get going, Remina...
Is something the matter?

But you wouldn't happen to be Professor Munakata?
Pardon me for asking...
Yes, I am.
I knew it! Your reputation precedes you... And I've heard a lot about you from Renami.
Nice to meet you. I'm Rindo Tsunekiyo, assistant professor at Joban University of Arts and Sciences.
Oh, I'm just an upstart. It's really an honor to meet you!
They call you the child prodigy of medieval history!
Rindo Tsunekiyo... Oh, I've read your books!

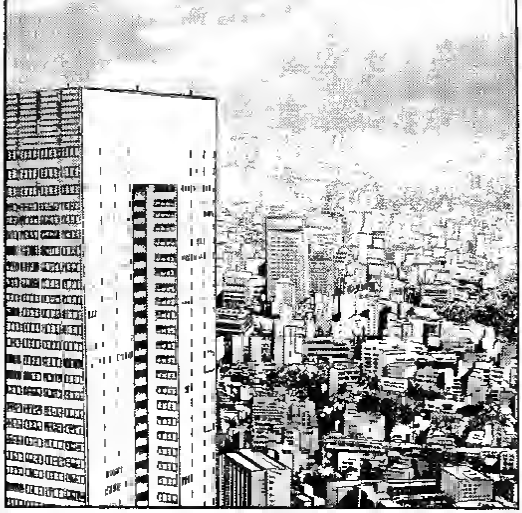
Renami's publishing agency is going to publish a book they commissioned me to write next month.
And Minamoto-no-Yoshitsune's the theme...
Y... Yeah.
So, I take it you're working as Rindo's editor. Gathering data for your magazine, I'm guessing?
Private?
So today we're going on a tour of Yoshitsune's battles. It's a bit of a private thing, though...

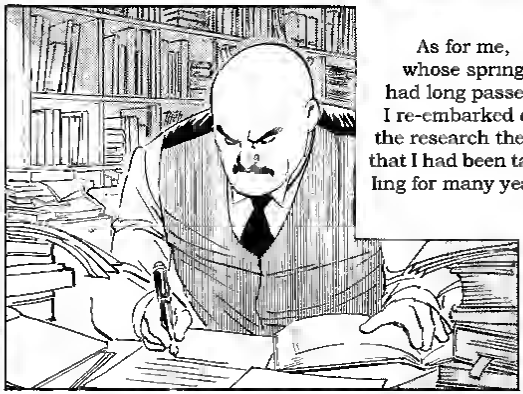
Oh, no.. It's still too soon...
I hope it goes well. Perhaps now you can finally retire to being a housewife.
Can we have a moment, Professor?
Why, is this immoral? Does he have a family?
Or are you trying to balance him and another man?
No!
I SAID NO!
But please!
I need you to not tell anyone that you saw us here!
So please, pretend you didn't see us... Okay!?
Well, it's no different to me. I'm not going to spread it everywhere or anything.
If anyone finds out that an editor like myself is having an affair with a writer, it'll be hard for me to find jobs
This industry's pretty uptight about that.

We just got back from seeing the site of the battle of Ichinotani, right over there.
That's the place where a few dozen cavalry under Yoshitsune's command plunged down from Hiyodori Pass
You said you were visiting Yoshitsune's battle-grounds?
They sprung a surprise attack on the Taira's main forces, which had set up camp at Ichinotani Castle along the shore, from the mountains behind them...
This battle routed the Taira, and spread Yoshitsune's name as a brilliant strategist.

We're planning on going to Yashima now, and we may as well cross over to Shikoku on the brand-new Akashi Bridge..
What a coincidence. I happened to have been touring Yoshitsune's battlegrounds myself, only in reverse order.
I guess spring comes to everyone..

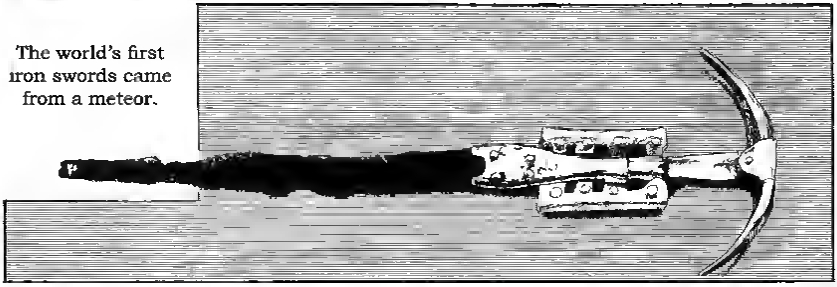
The
"Iron
People"
...




As for me, whose spring had long passed, I re-embarked on the research theme that I had been tackling for many years

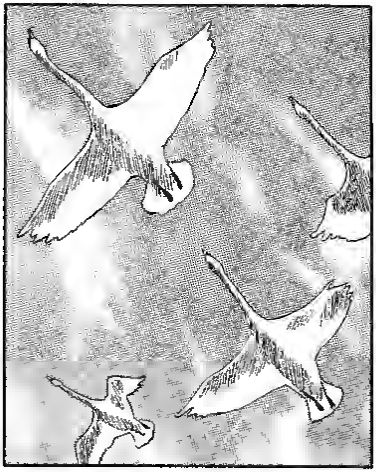
The Hittites, who thrived in Asia Minor in ancient times, created the world's first iron weapons out of "meteoric iron" that came from a small meteor that fell to Earth

The world's first iron swords came from a meteor.



Before long, iron could be manufactured from iron ore and iron sand, and the iron-age civilization spread throughout the world

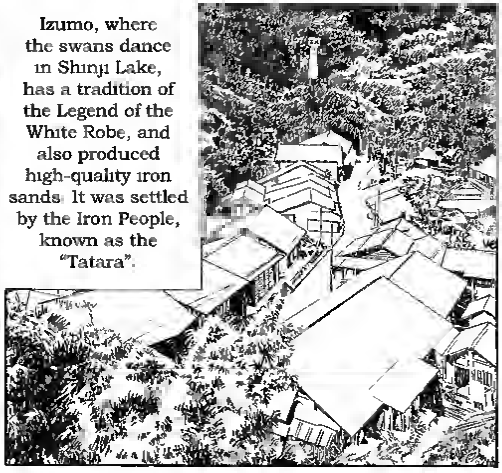
The so-called "Iron People", whose principal trade was ironworking, spread throughout the world. They often followed the migratory routes of the swans.



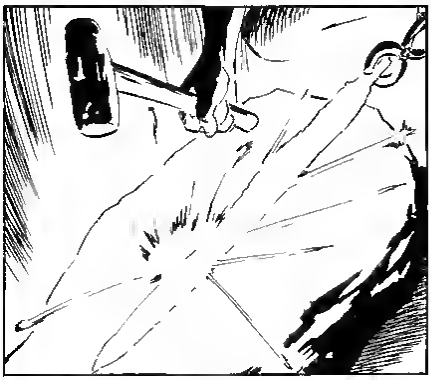
The Grecian myth of the Pleiades arrived in Japan in the form of the Legend of the White Robe.

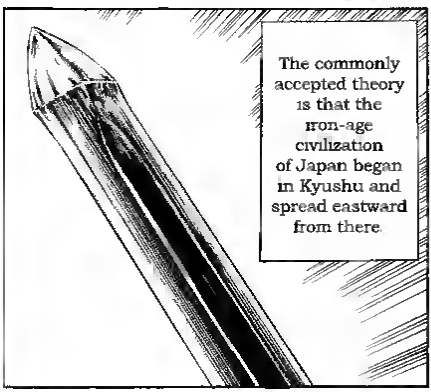
They transmitted myths and legends about the swans.

Izumo, where the swans dance in Shinji Lake, has a tradition of the Legend of the White Robe, and also produced high-quality iron sands. It was settled by the Iron People, known as the "Tatara".



The iron swords were double-edged and straight-bladed, and could very well be called "straight swords".

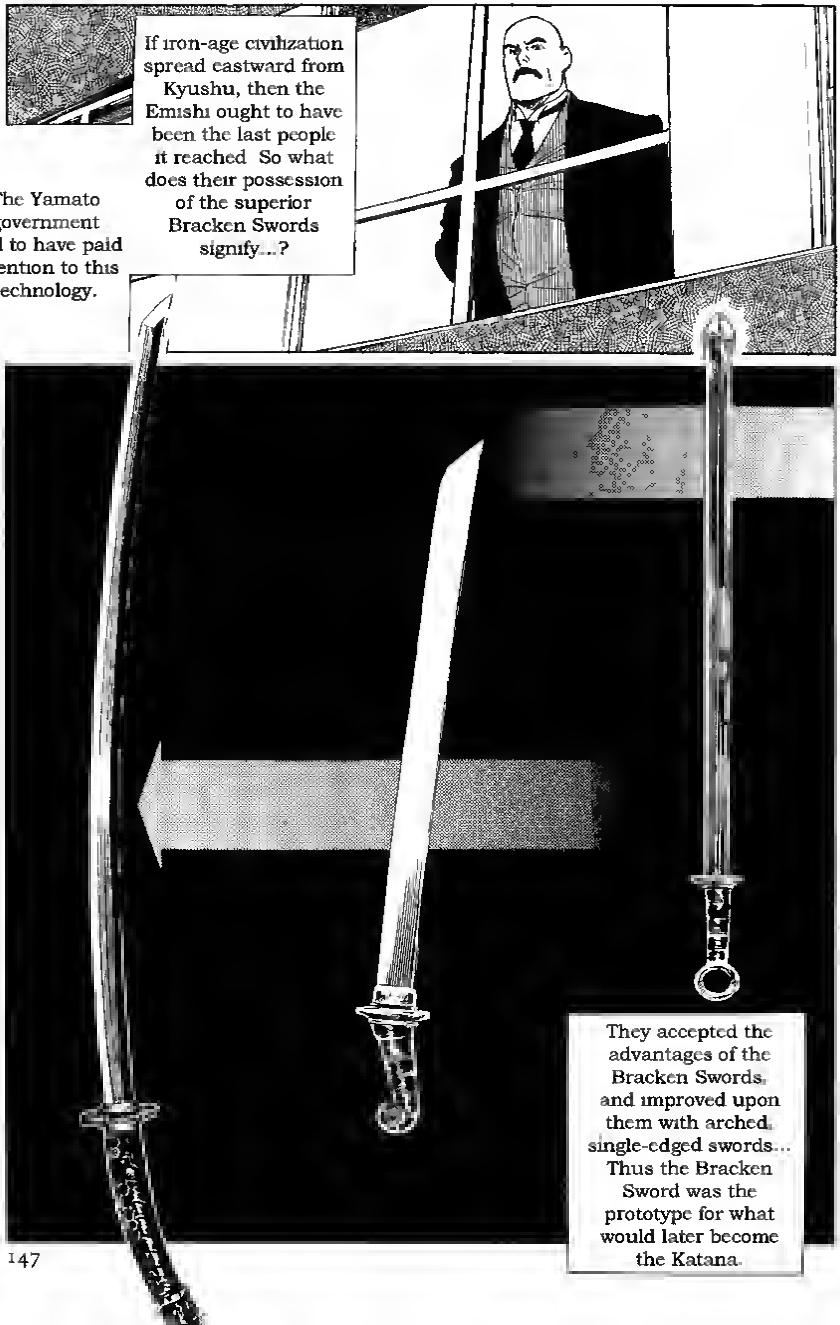


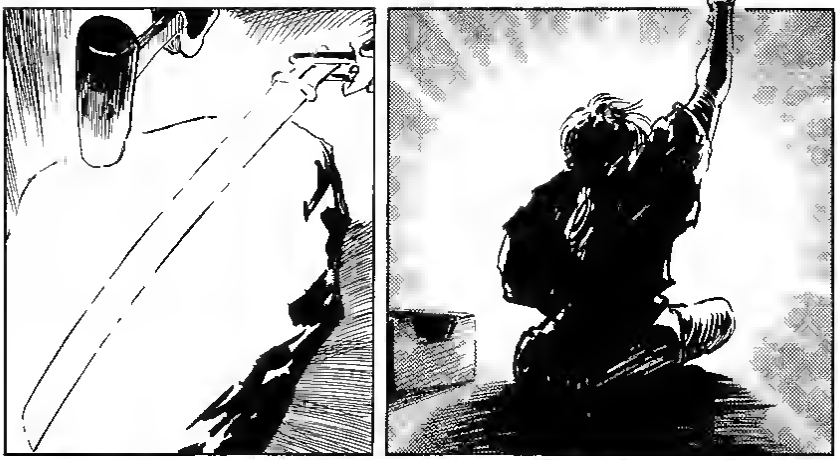


The commonly accepted theory is that the iron-age civilization of Japan began in Kyushu and spread eastward from there.

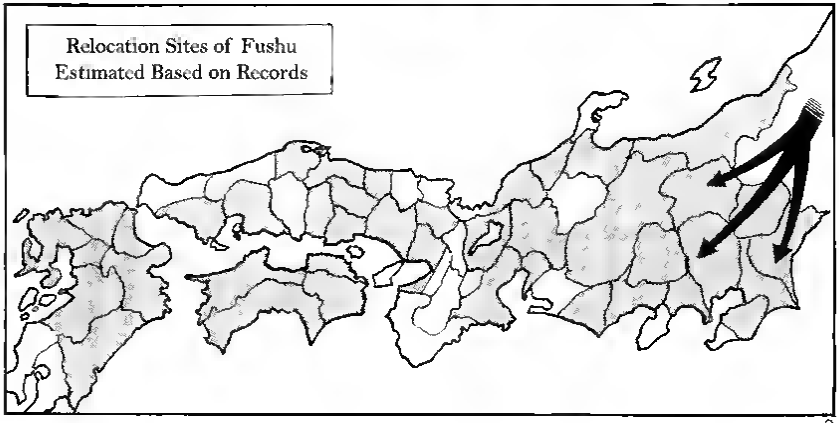
But when the Yamato government rode out to conquer the Emishi of the East...

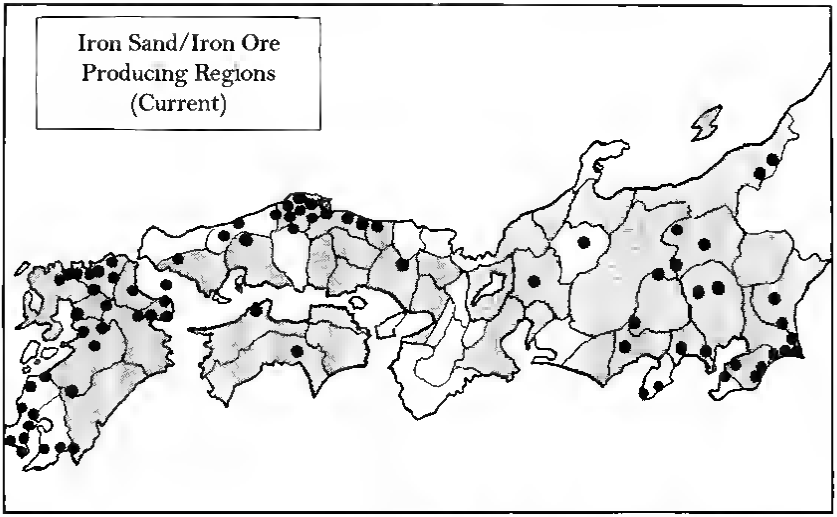
The straight swords were broken by the Emishi's Bracken Swords, with their single edges and slightly angled blades more suitable for fencing...

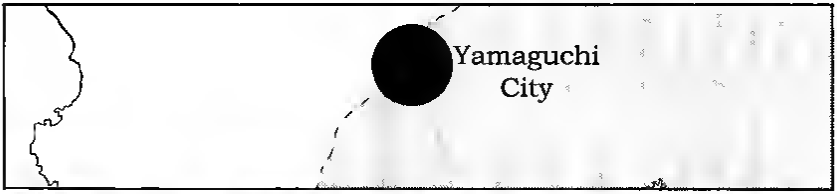

If iron-age civilization spread eastward from Kyushu, then the Emishi ought to have been the last people it reached. So what does their possession of the superior Bracken Swords signify...?
The Yamato government had to have paid attention to this technology.
They accepted the advantages of the Bracken Swords, and improved upon them with arched, single-edged swords... Thus the Bracken Sword was the prototype for what would later become the Katana.

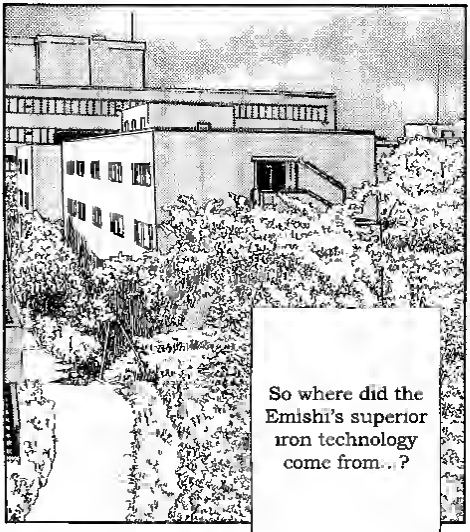


If they sent in those Emishi as Fushu to iron-producing regions and iron manufacturing centers.
Perhaps those among the Emishi with exceptional blacksmithing skill were relocated throughout the country by the Yamato government and used to improve swords.

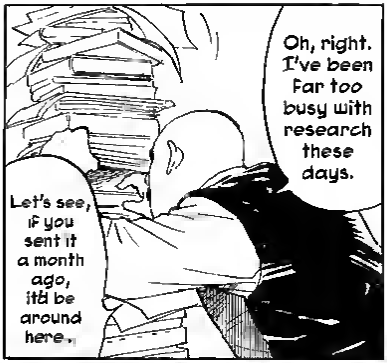

Relocation Sites of Fushu Estimated Based on Records

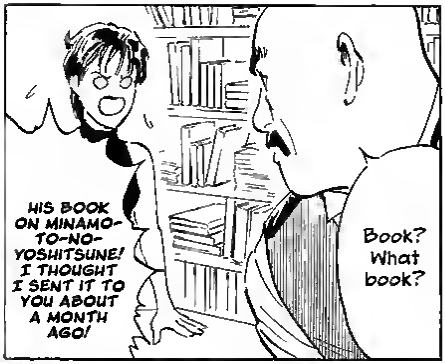

Iron Sand/Iron Ore
Producing Regions
(Current)

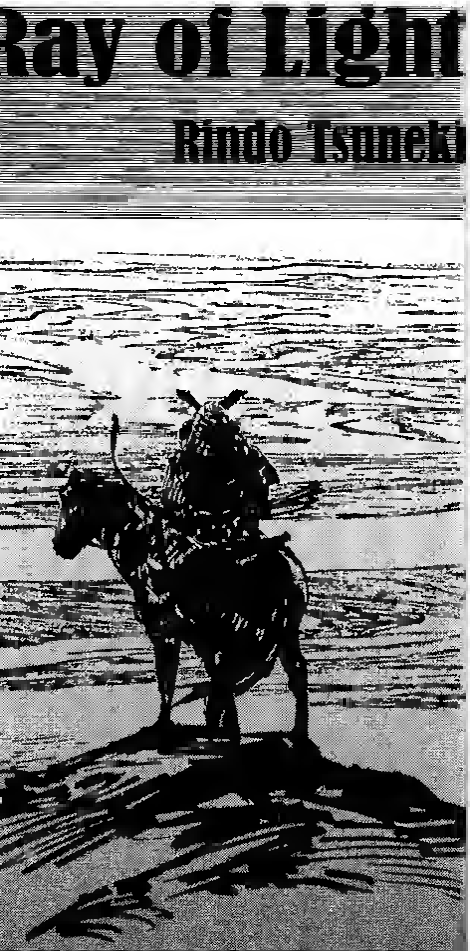

Yamaguchi
City

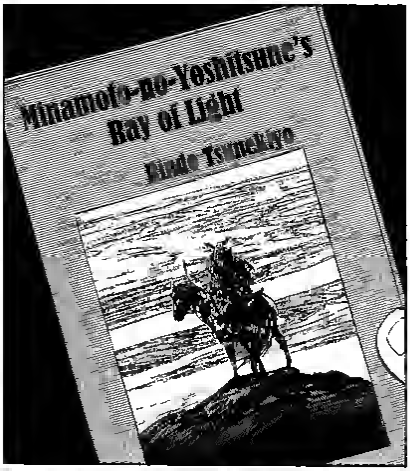

So where did the Emishi's superior iron technology come from..?

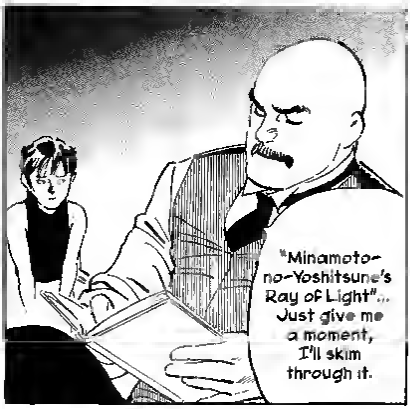
What is it now? There's still time until the next article in the Zodiac series, and wasn't someone else supposed to take over for you?
His... Rindo's new book landed him in hot water
He may have to resign as assistant professor...

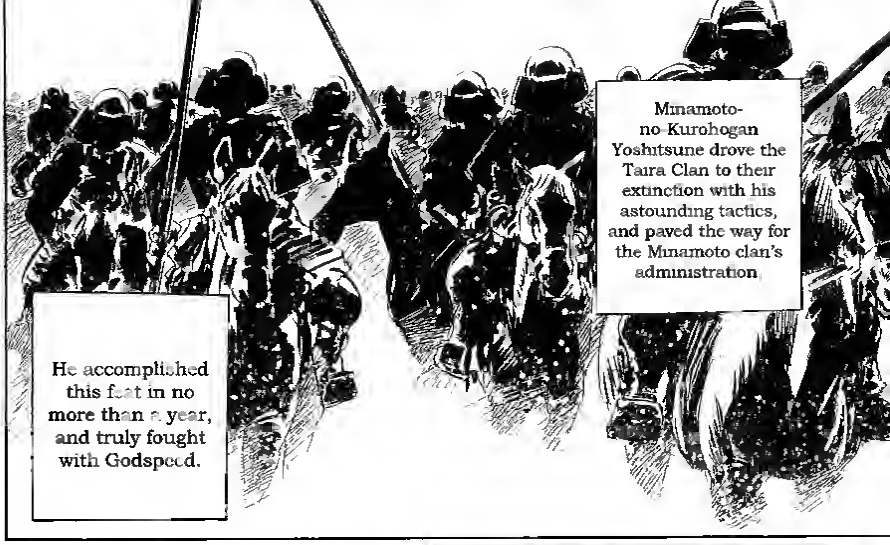

Oh, right. I've been far too busy with research these days.
Let's see, if you sent it a month ago, it'd be around here...

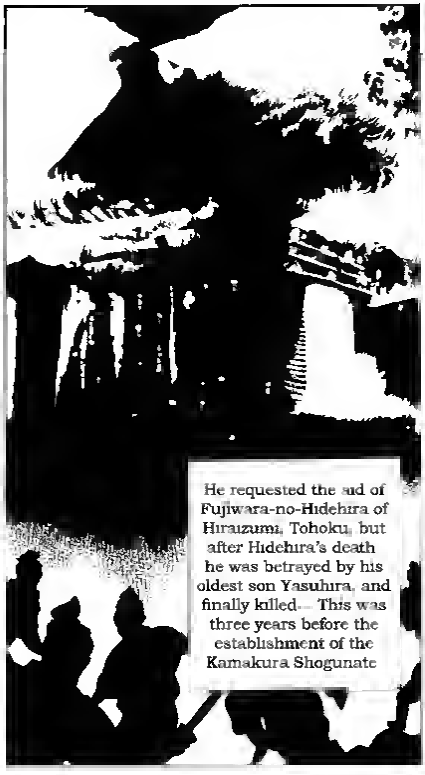

HIS BOOK ON MINAMOTO-NO-YOSHITSUNE! I THOUGHT I SENT IT TO YOU ABOUT A MONTH AGO!
Book? What book?

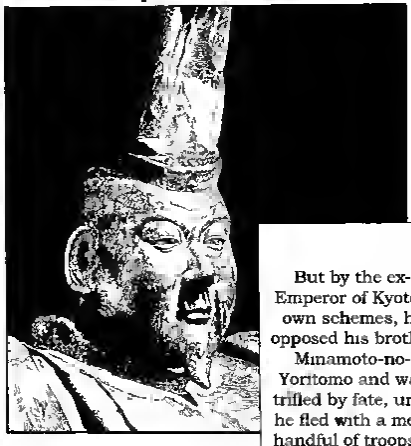

Ray of Light
Rindo Tsuneki

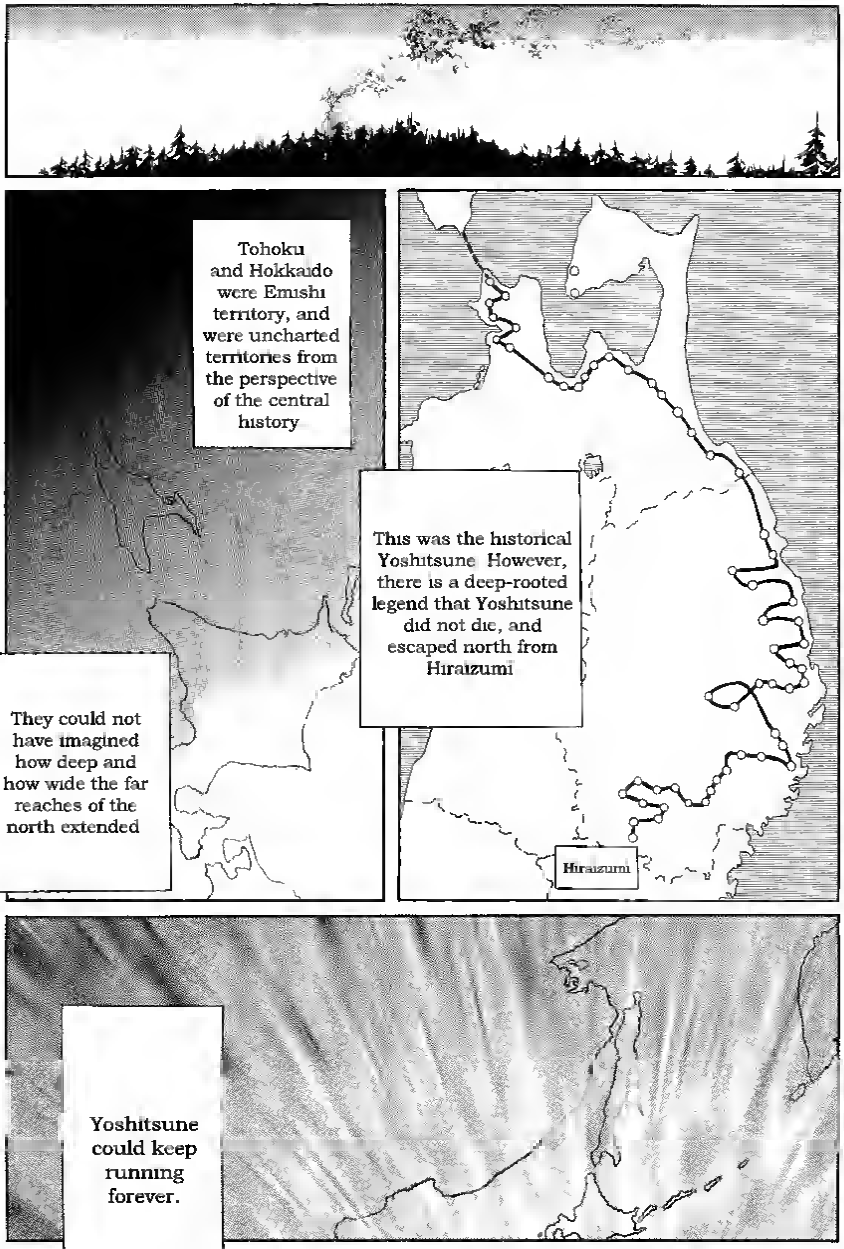

Minamoto-no-Yoshitsune's Ray of Light
Rindo Tsuneki


"Minamoto-no-Yoshitsune's Ray of Light"... Just give me a moment, I'll skim through it.


He accomplished this feat in no more than a year, and truly fought with Godspeed.
Minamoto-no-Kurohogan Yoshitsune drove the Taira Clan to their extinction with his astounding tactics, and paved the way for the Minamoto clan's administration.


He requested the aid of Fujiwara-no-Hidehira of Hiraizumi, Tohoku, but after Hidehira's death he was betrayed by his oldest son Yasuhira, and finally killed... This was three years before the establishment of the Kamakura Shogunate


But by the ex-Emperor of Kyoto's own schemes, he opposed his brother Minamoto-no-Yoritomo and was trifled by fate, until he fled with a mere handful of troops...


Tohoku and Hokkaido were Emishi territory, and were uncharted territories from the perspective of the central history
This was the historical Yoshitsune. However, there is a deep-rooted legend that Yoshitsune did not die, and escaped north from Hiraizumi
They could not have imagined how deep and how wide the far reaches of the north extended
Hiraizumi
Yoshitsune could keep running forever.

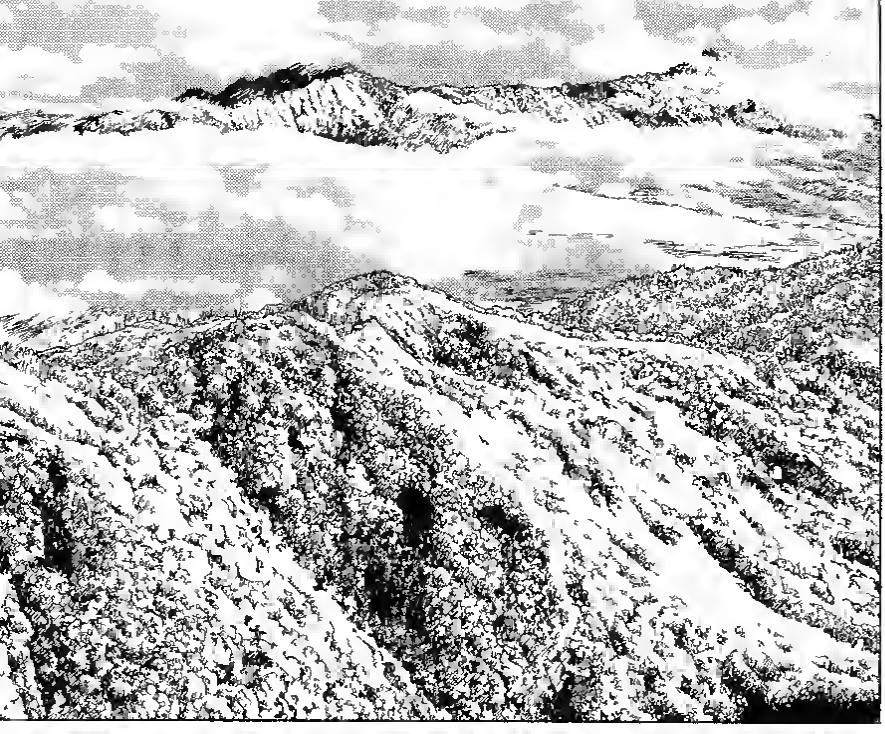
Yoshitsune may have already been in negotiations with them for a long time
For the Emishi's world was wide beyond our imagination
His hypothesis that Yoshitsune escaped from Hiraizumi alive incurred the ire of his professors.
.....

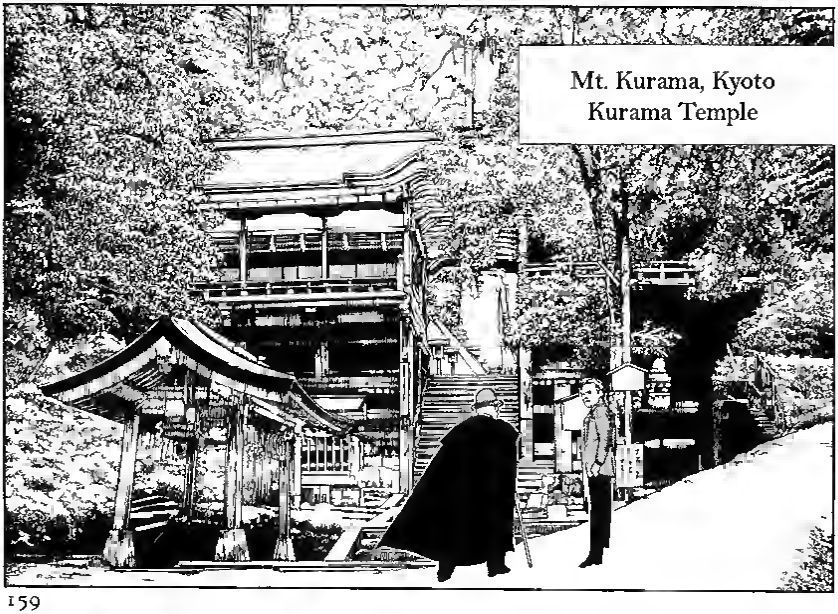
Yoshitsune's death is a textbook historical fact! You do not have the capacity to overturn this! That is pure arrogance!
Ridiculous!
This is utterly inappropriate. It may even affect the prestige of our university.
Hand in your resignation at once!
These infantile fallacies that Yoshitsune had a scapegoat, or that he became Genghis Khan, refuse to die out. It is the purpose of academics to correct them!
They're all just horrible men!
I'm telling you, those stuffy old men just couldn't stomach Rindo for announcing his hypothesis with cutting edge ideas!

That's an exaggeration. It'll all work out if he remains steadfast...
But his academic life may be over by then.
Our magazine was planning on publicizing Rindo's book and publishing his travelling journal as a special feature...
PROFESSOR MUNAKATA
YOU JUST DON'T CARE WHAT HAPPENS TO MY BOYFRIEND! AFTER ALL I'VE DONE TO HELP YOU GATHER RESEARCH!!
WAAAAAAAH HHHHHHHHHH!
WAAAAAAAH HHHHHHHHHH!

AHHH HH!
AHHH HH!
STOP CRYING!
SO WHAT AM I SUPPOSED TO DO?
IF YOU'LL VERIFY RINDO'S HYPOTHESIS, THEN HE MAY GET A LITTLE MORE RECOGNITION!
A LITTLE MORE !?
P... PLEASE, JOIN HIM TO RESEARCH FOR HIS TRAVELLING JOURNAL!
BUT YOU'RE NOT EVEN A SPECIALIST IN MEDIEVAL HISTORY, AND RINDO WOULDN'T LET YOU TALK HIM DOWN!
AND WHAT IF I END UP STIRRING UP A HORNET'S NEST? I HAVE NO INTENTION OF BEING HIS ADVOCATE! I MAY EVEN OPPOSE HIM!

Does Rindo know about this?
If he knew, he'd be so angry that we'd be through.
I see... Then don't say a word to him.
I'm going to give Rindo a call tomorrow.
.....

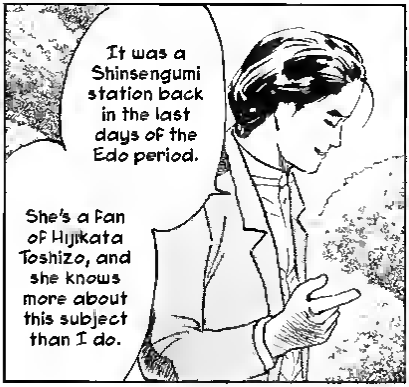


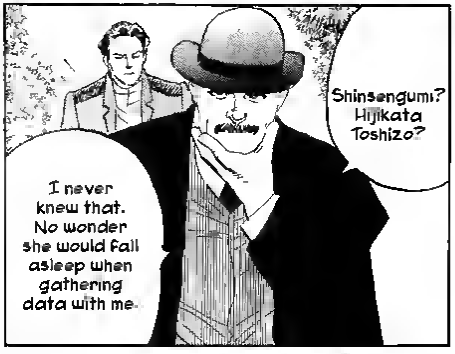


Mt. Kurama, Kyoto
Kurama Temple

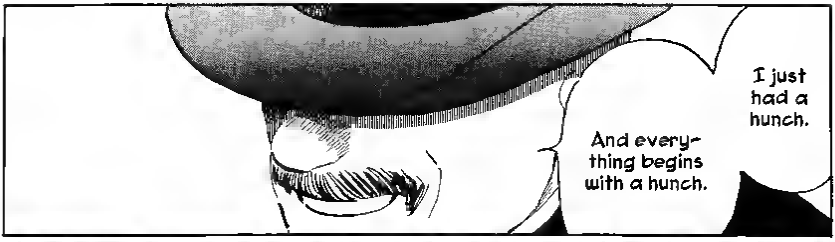
Mibu?

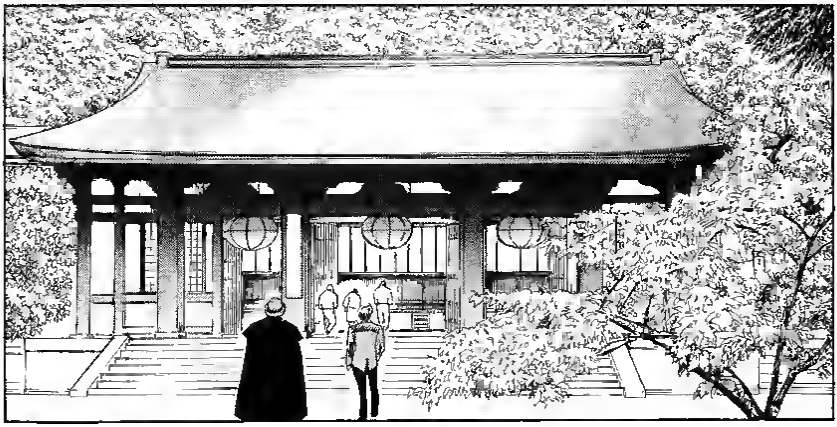
She's going to be a little late. She can't take a trip to Kyoto without starting it with a visit to Mibu.
Where's Ike?

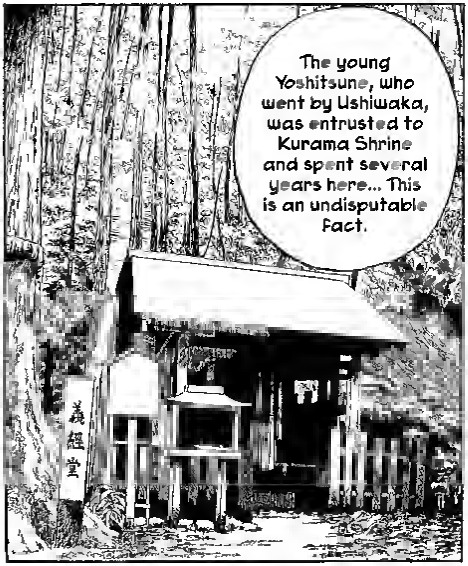

It was a Shinsengumi station back in the last days of the Edo period.
She's a fan of Hijikata Toshizo, and she knows more about this subject than I do.

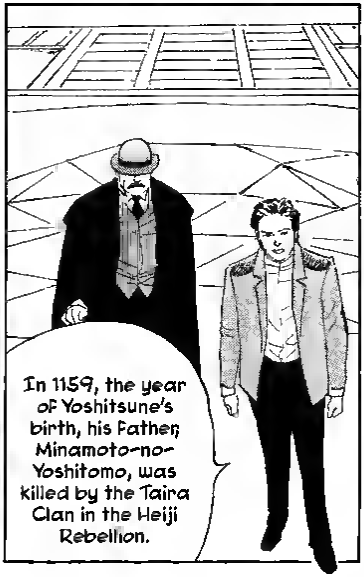

Shinsengumi? Hijikata Toshizo?
I never knew that. No wonder she would fall asleep when gathering data with me.

I was taken aback when you insisted on accompanying me.
Professor Munakata...
Do you really think there's a connection between your research and Yoshitsune?


I just had a hunch.
And everything begins with a hunch.

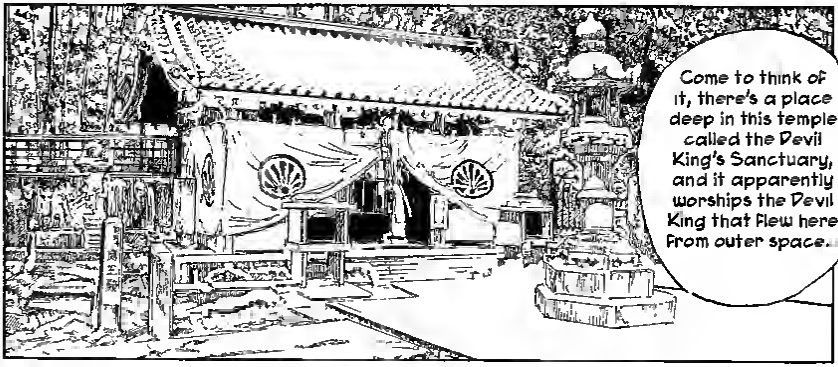



The young Yoshitsune, who went by Ushiwaka, was entrusted to Kurama Shrine and spent several years here... This is an undisputable fact.
義經堂

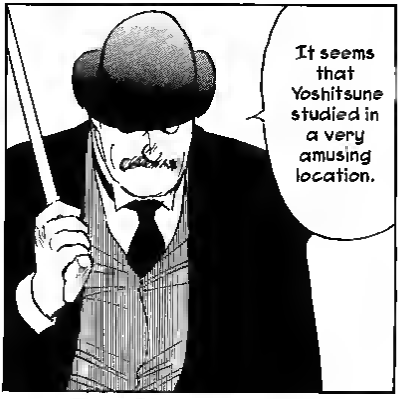

In 1159, the year of Yoshitsune's birth, his father, Minamoto-no-Yoshitomo, was killed by the Taira Clan in the Heiji Rebellion.

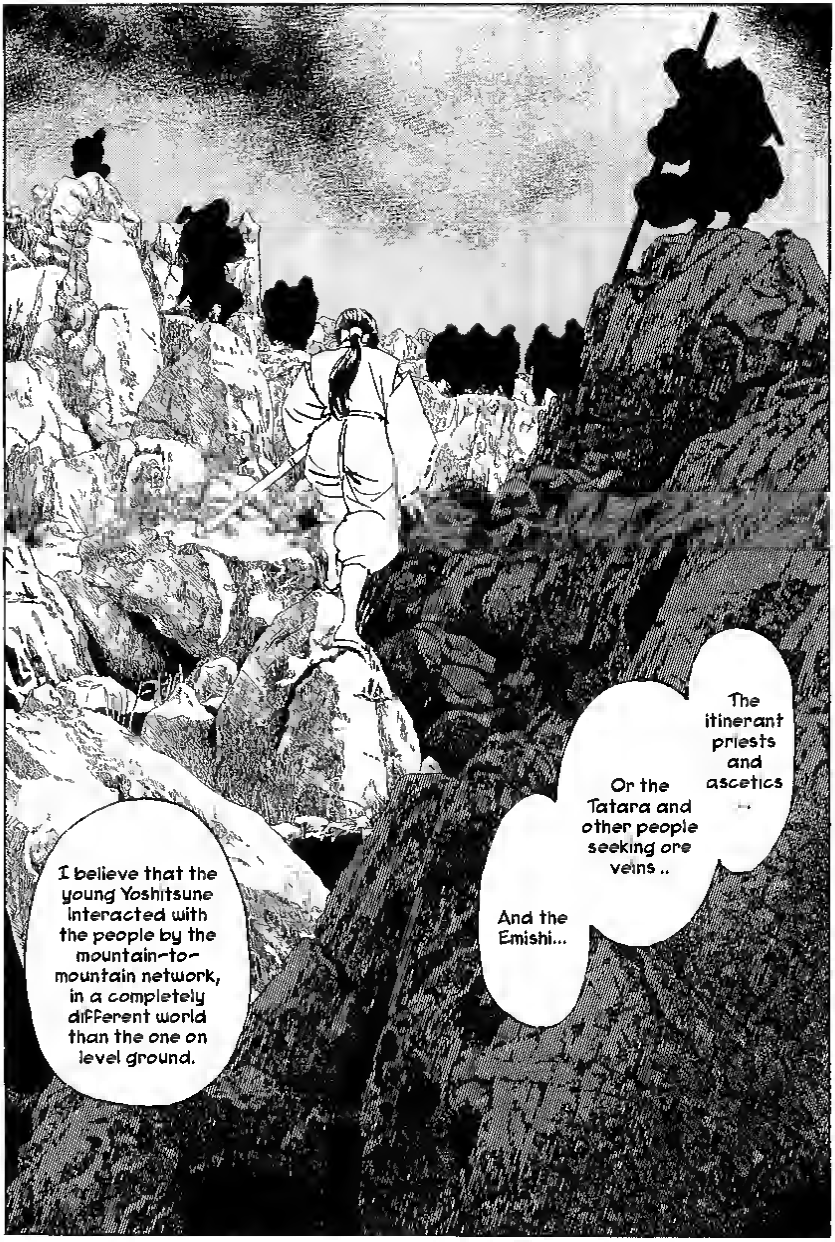
According to legend, Ushiwaka trained in the martial arts daily under a Tengu on Mt. Kurama, to defeat the Taira Clan, the fatal foes of his father.
...Yes?
Oh, never mind. Speaking of Tengu, though...
The Tengu of Kurama... Heheh .. I remember that he did battle with Hijikata Toshizo of the Shinsengumi in a movie I saw a long time ago...
Meteors?
Did you know that they were originally called Heavenly Foxes, and referred to meteors?

According to the "Nihon Shoki", in the ninth year of Emperor Jomei's reign, a giant star streaked from East to West across the sky with a thunderous sound.
Based on his Chinese knowledge, Somin judged this to be a Heavenly Fox.


Come to think of it, there's a place deep in this temple called the Devil King's Sanctuary, and it apparently worships the Devil King that flew here from outer space.

I believe that the Tengu symbolizes that.
Kurama is also known as the Dark Mountain, and it's known as a holy land of asceticism, where itinerant priests make their pilgrimages to.

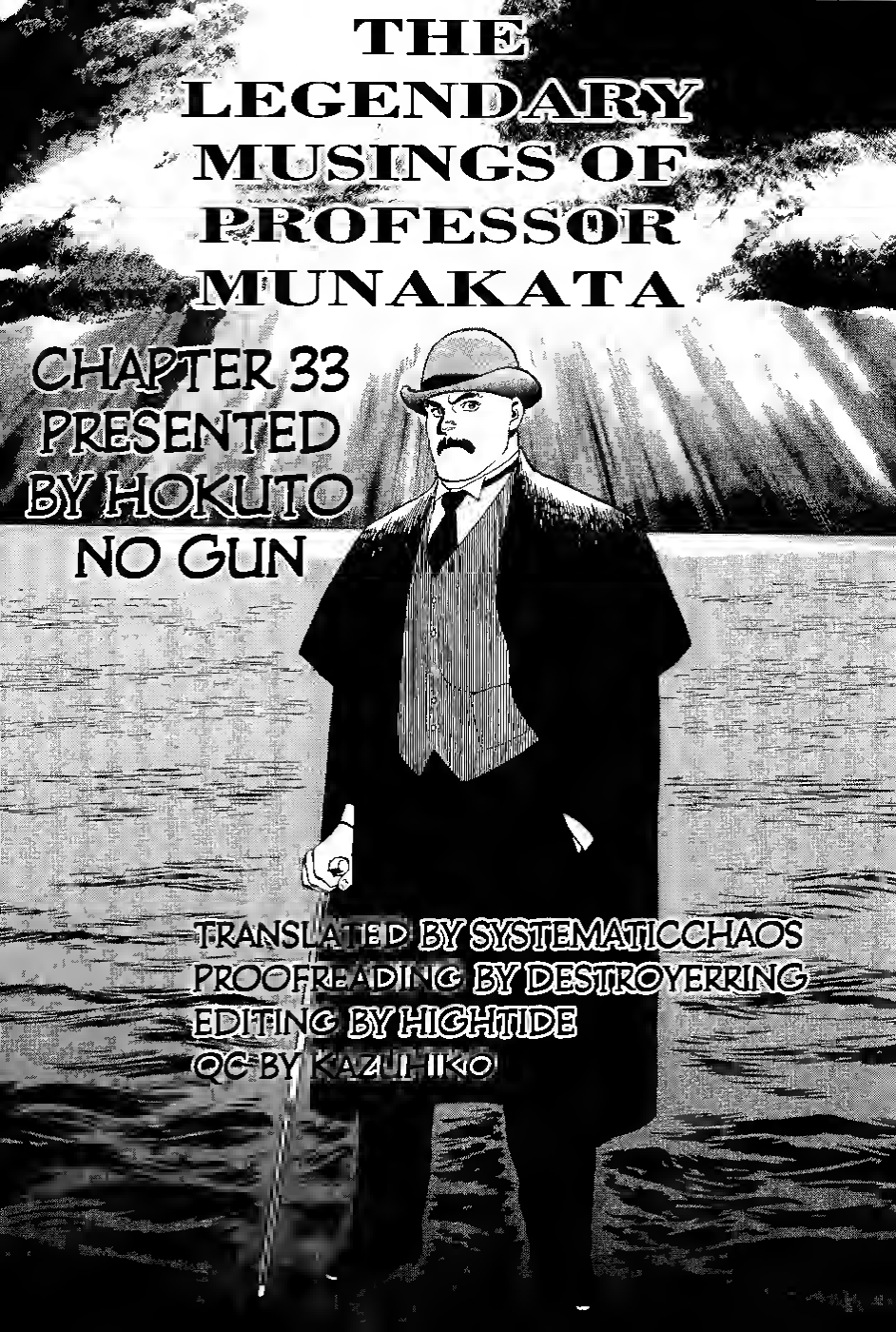

It seems that Yoshitsune studied in a very amusing location.


I believe that the young Yoshitsune interacted with the people by the mountain-to-mountain network, in a completely different world than the one on level ground.
And the Emishi...
Or the Tatara and other people seeking ore veins ..
The itinerant priests and ascetics ..

THE LEGENDARY MUSINGS OF PROFESSOR MUNAKATA

CHAPTER 33

PRESENTED BY HOKUTO NO GUN



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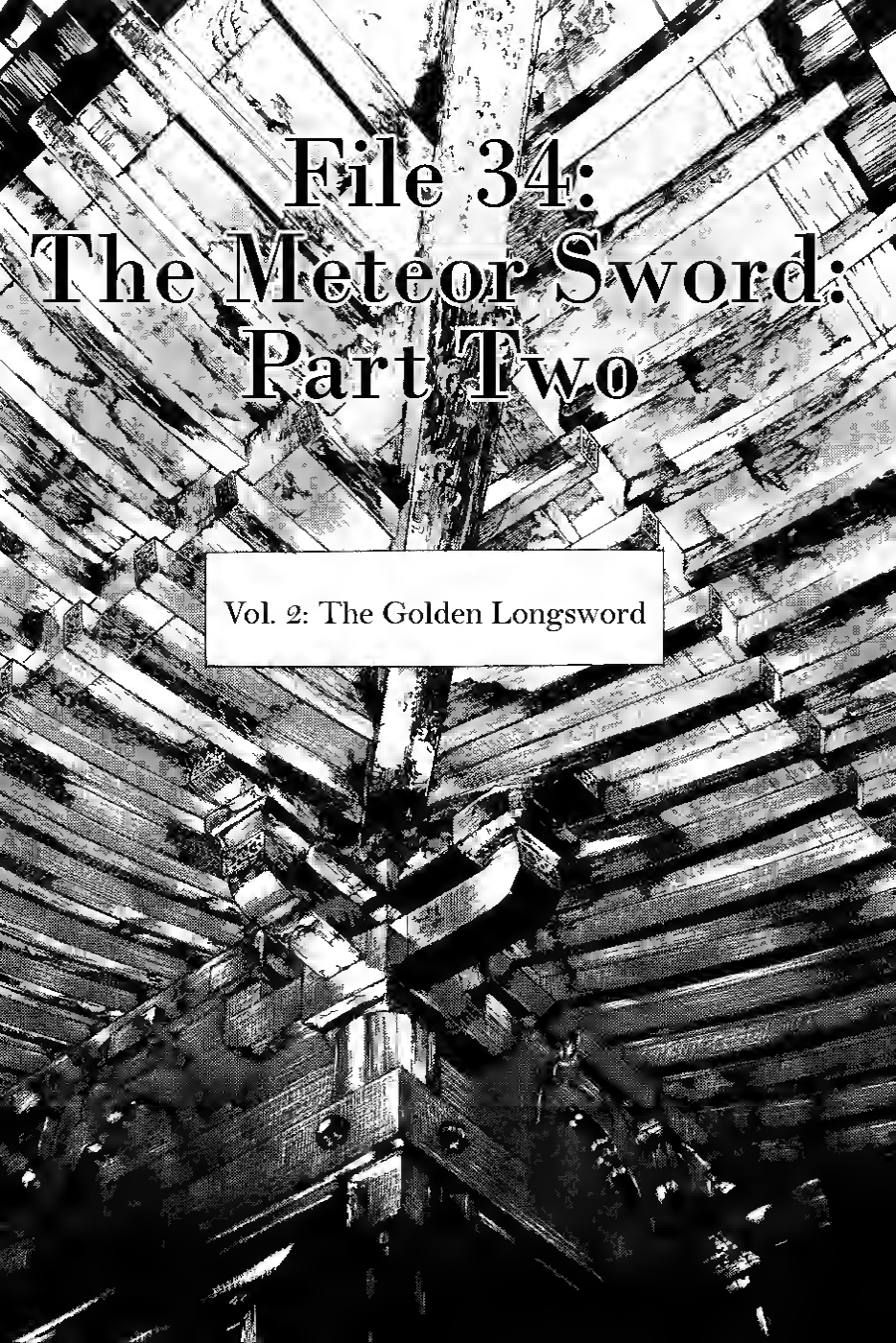
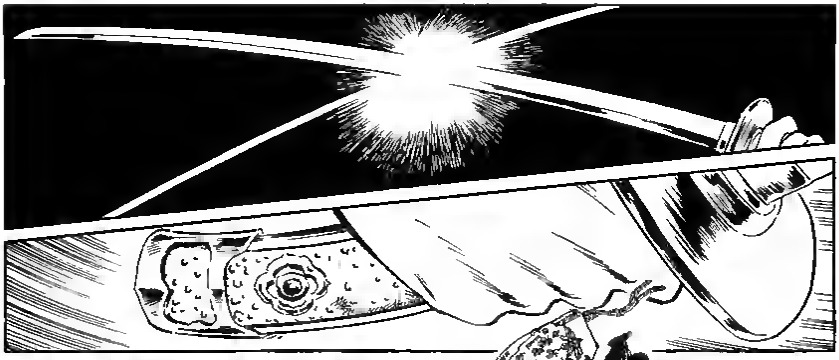
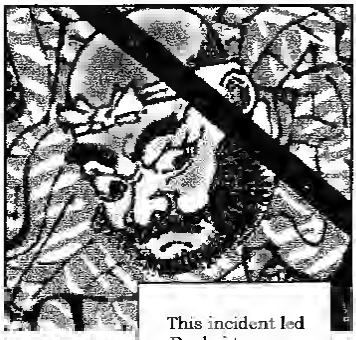
PROOFREADING BY DESTROYERRING
EDITING BY HIGHTIDE
QC BY KAZUHIKO



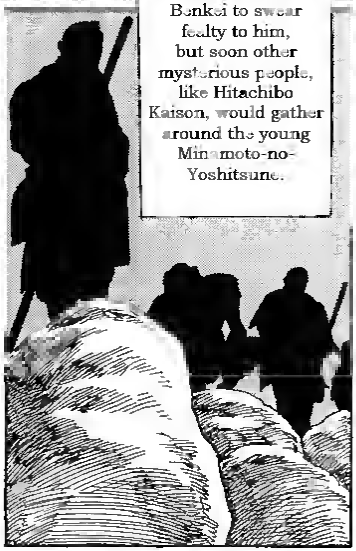
File 34: The Meteor Sword: Part Two

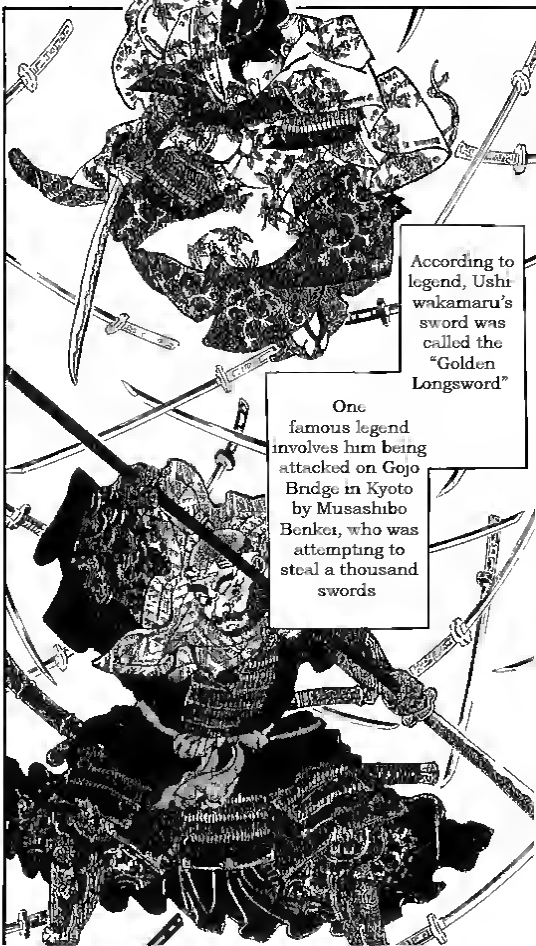
Vol. 2: The Golden Longsword





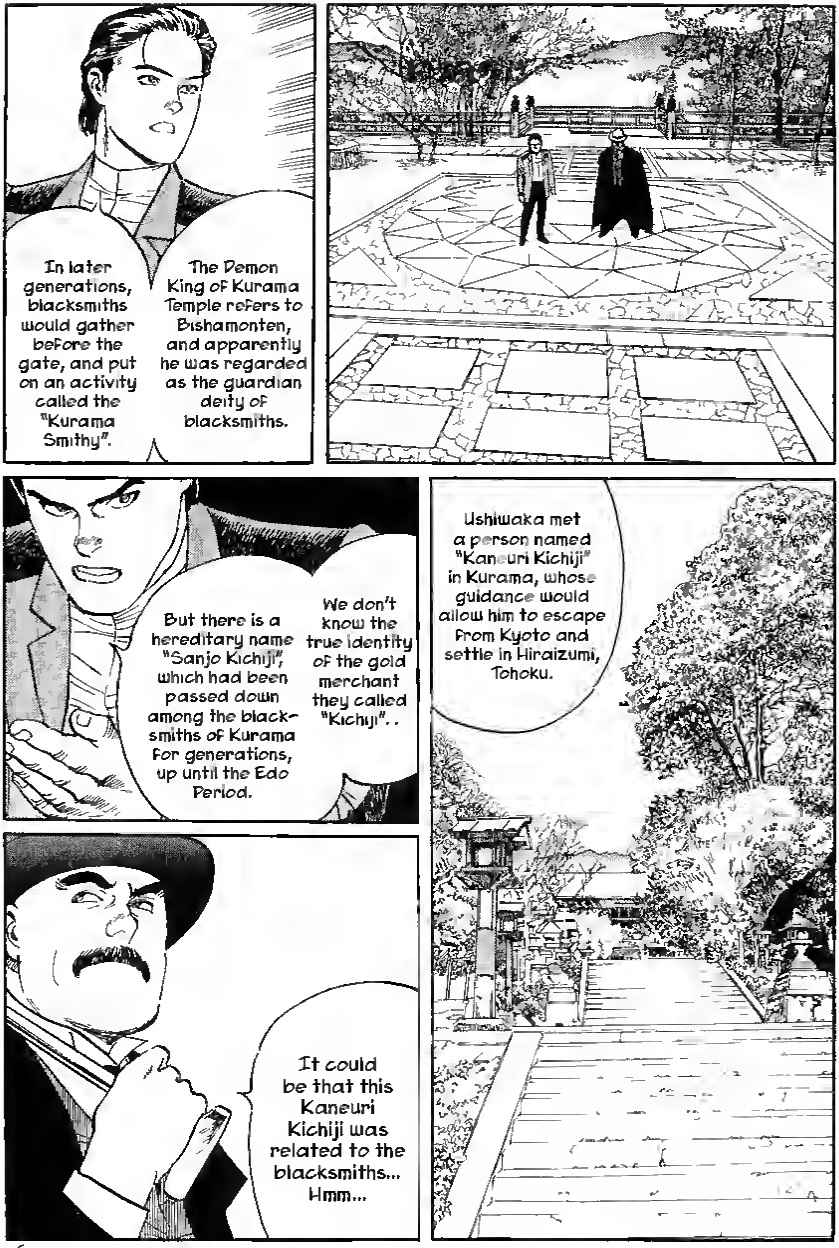
This incident led Benkei to swear fealty to him, but soon other mysterious people, like Hitachibo Kaison, would gather around the young Minamoto-no-Yoshitsune.

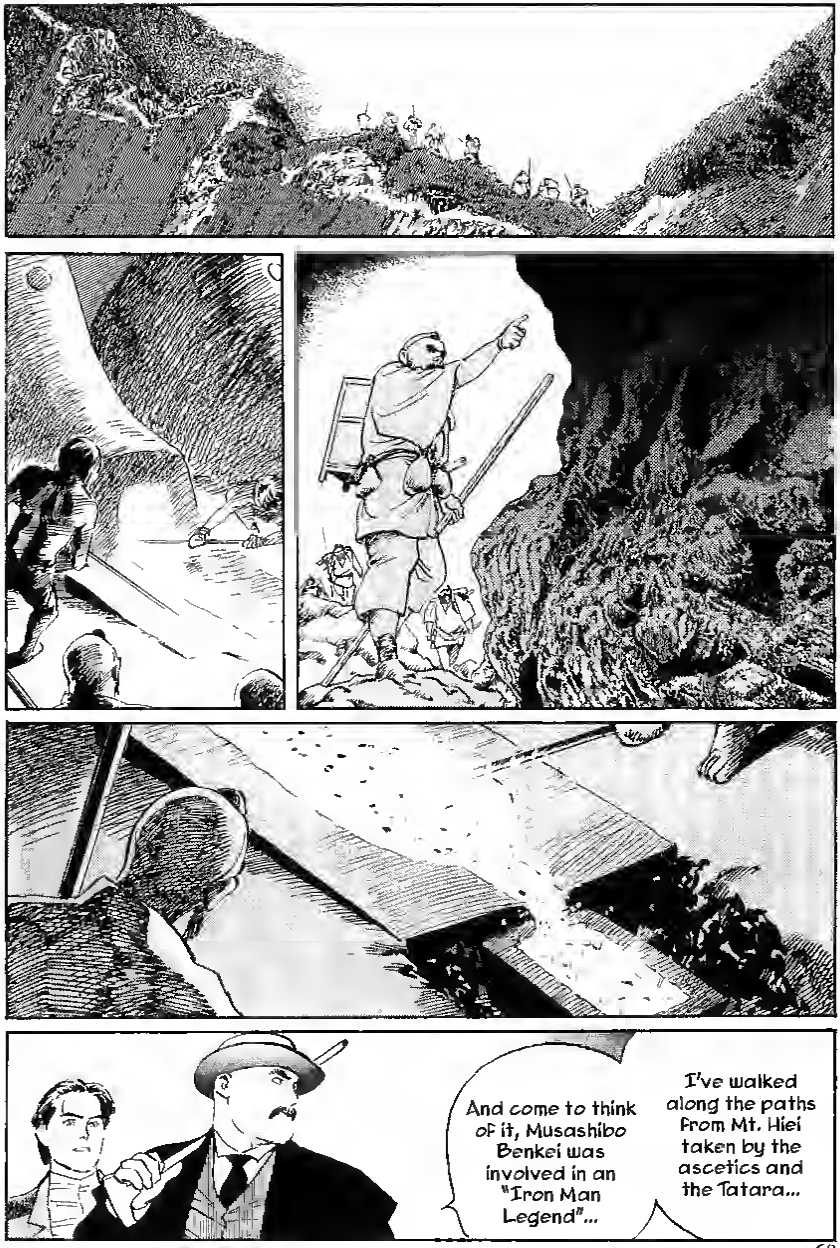


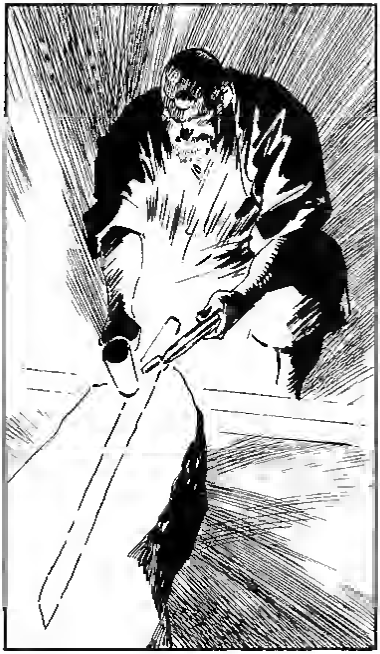


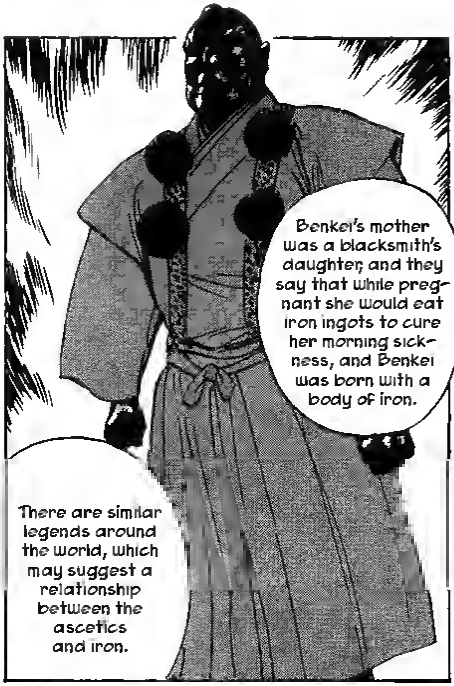
According to legend, Ushiwakamaru's sword was called the "Golden Longsword"

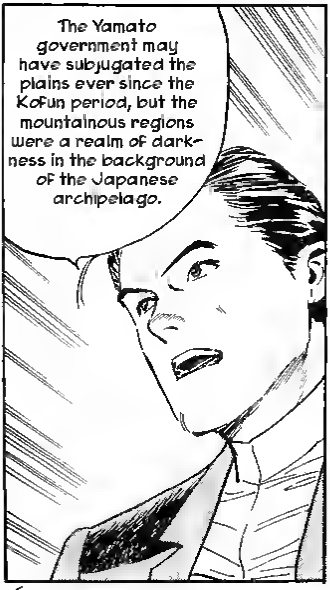
One famous legend involves him being attacked on Gojo Bridge in Kyoto by Musashibo Benkei, who was attempting to steal a thousand swords


In later generations, blacksmiths would gather before the gate, and put on an activity called the "Kurama Smithy".
The Demon King of Kurama Temple refers to Bishamonten, and apparently he was regarded as the guardian deity of blacksmiths.
But there is a hereditary name "Sanjo Kichiji", which had been passed down among the blacksmiths of Kurama for generations, up until the Edo Period.
We don't know the true identity of the gold merchant they called "Kichiji"..
Ushiwaka met a person named "Kaneuri Kichiji" in Kurama, whose guidance would allow him to escape from Kyoto and settle in Hiraizumi, Tohoku.
It could be that this Kaneuri Kichiji was related to the blacksmiths... Hmm...


I've walked along the paths from Mt. Hiei taken by the ascetics and the Tatara...
And come to think of it, Musashibo Benkei was involved in an "Iron Man Legend"...



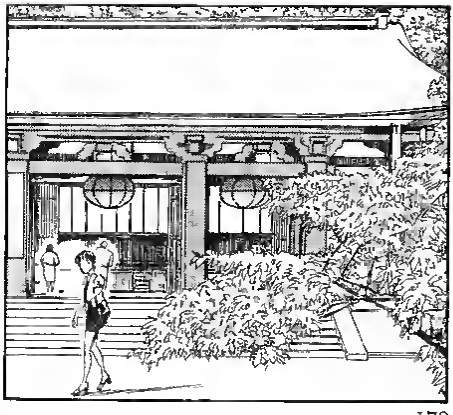

Benkei's mother was a blacksmith's daughter, and they say that while pregnant she would eat iron ingots to cure her morning sickness, and Benkei was born with a body of iron.
There are similar legends around the world, which may suggest a relationship between the ascetics and iron.

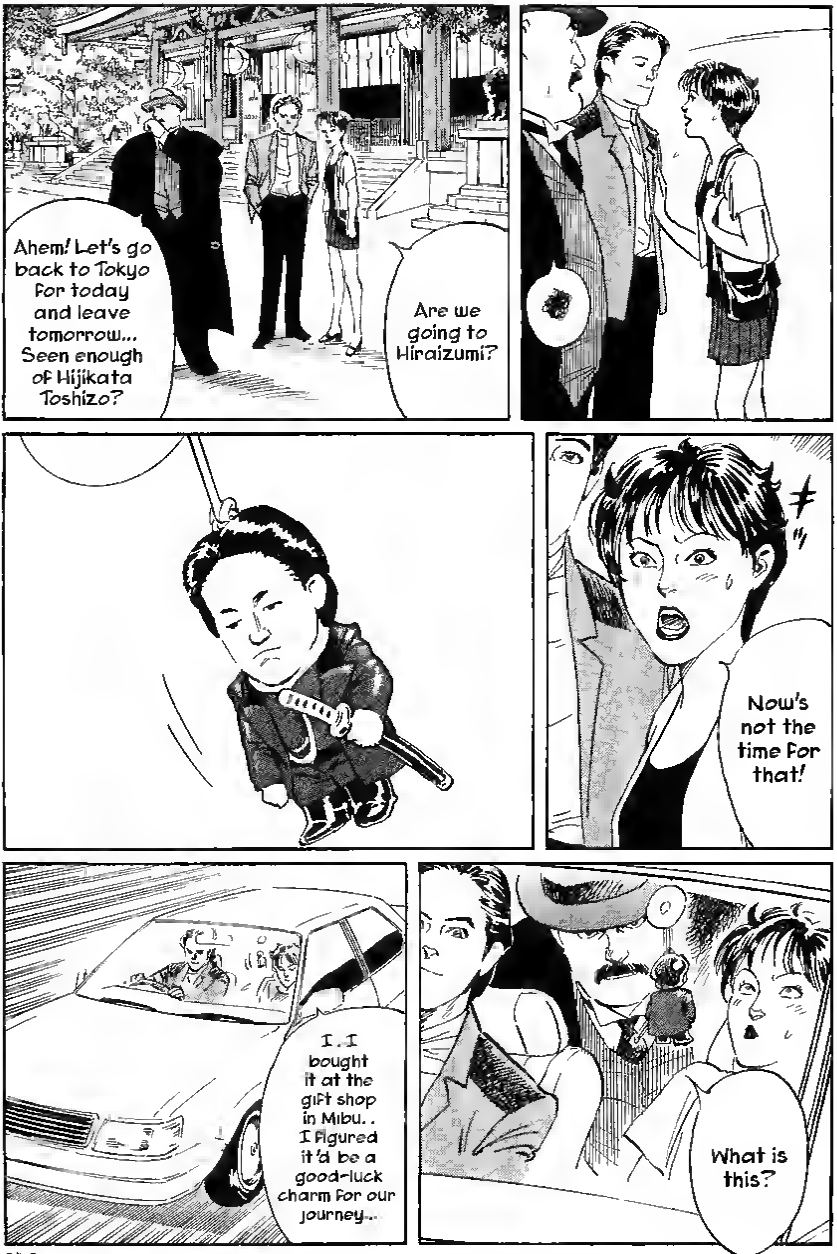

The Yamato government may have subjugated the plains ever since the KoFun period, but the mountainous regions were a realm of darkness in the background of the Japanese archipelago.

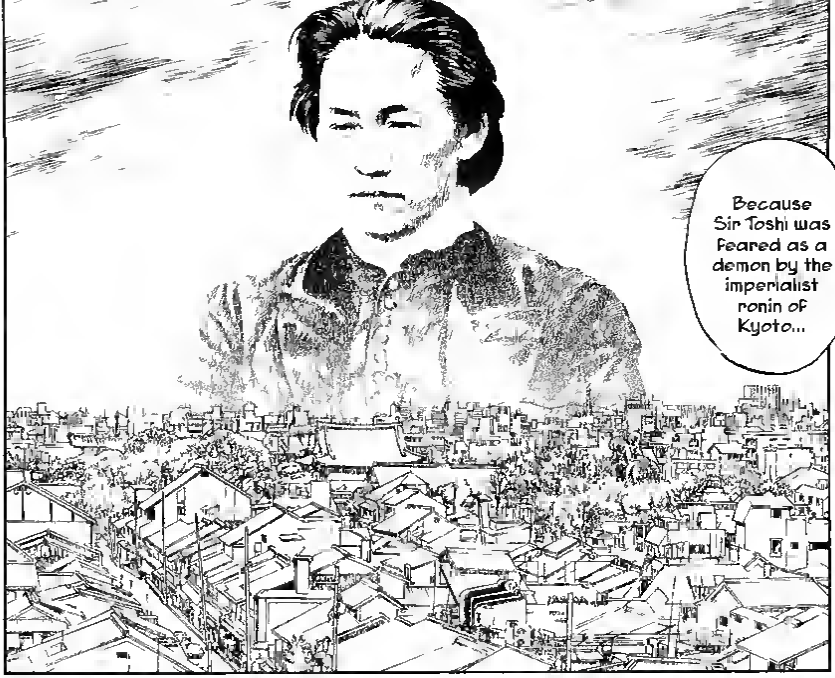
While we're at it, there are plenty of "Fushu Villages", filled with relocated Emishi, around Mt. Kurama. They must have frequented this temple as well.
So, the mountains with traditions of meteors are inhabited by people connected to iron...

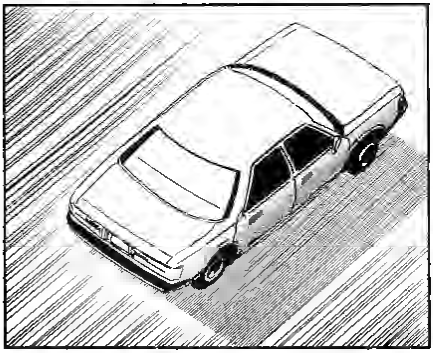
This allowed Ushiwakamaru, or Yoshitsune, to travel to Fujiwara-no-Hirahide in Hiraizumi with "Benkei" and "Kichiji".
There was plenty of room for the mountain people to interact and travel.

Pro-fessor Muna-kata!

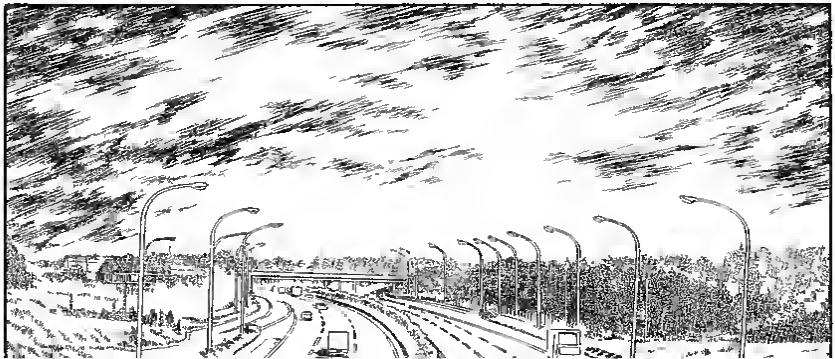


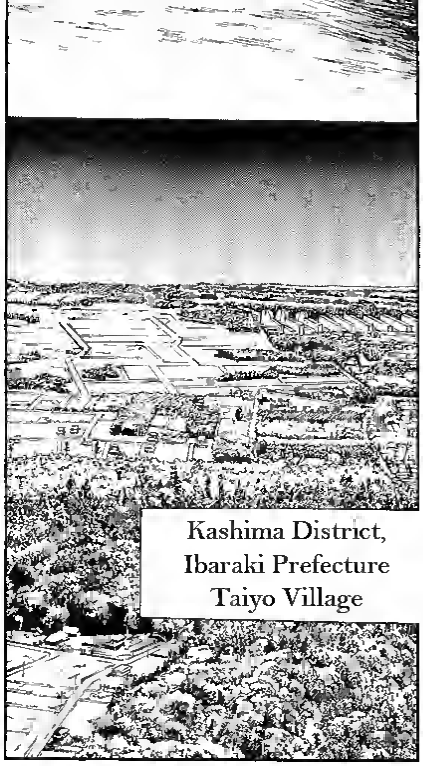

Ahem! Let's go back to Tokyo for today and leave tomorrow... Seen enough of Hijikata Toshizo?
Are we going to Hiraizumi?
Now's not the time for that!
I, I bought it at the gift shop in Mibu.. I figured it'd be a good-luck charm for our journey...
What is this?

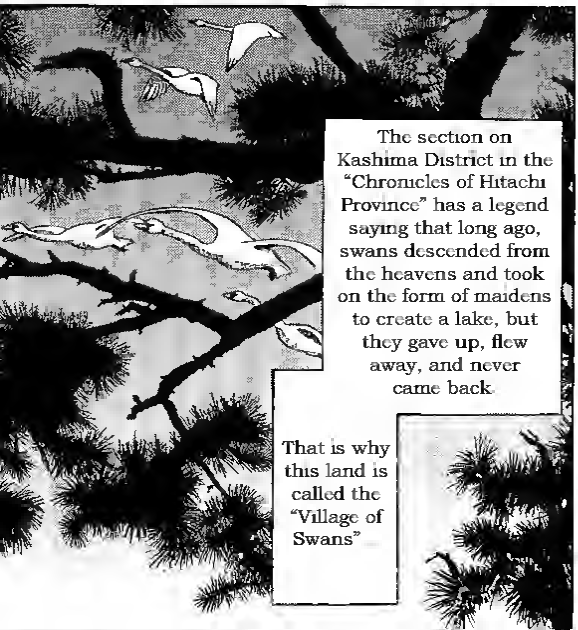

Because Sir Toshi was feared as a demon by the imperialist ronin of Kyoto...

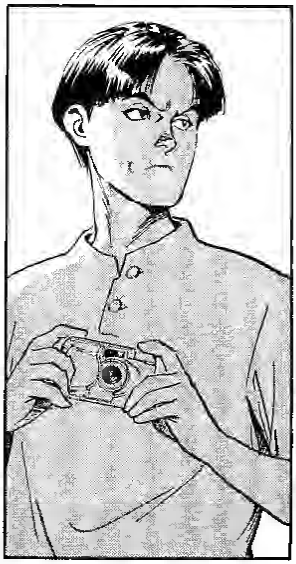


But in the end, he was defeated by the loyalists and forced to escape to the East...

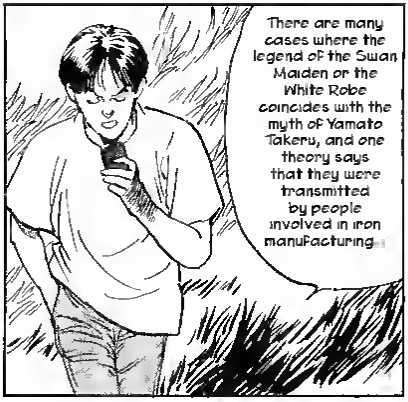


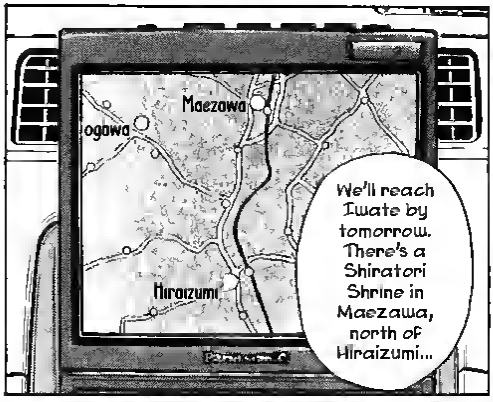

Kashima District,
Ibaraki Prefecture
Taiyo Village

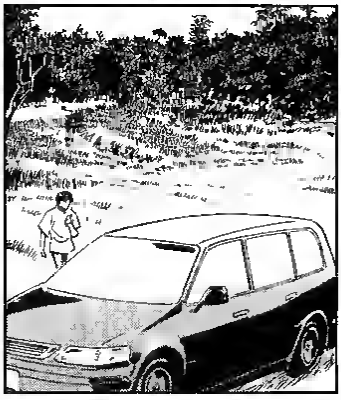

The section on Kashima District in the "Chronicles of Hitachi Province" has a legend saying that long ago, swans descended from the heavens and took on the form of maidens to create a lake, but they gave up, flew away, and never came back.
That is why this land is called the "Village of Swans"

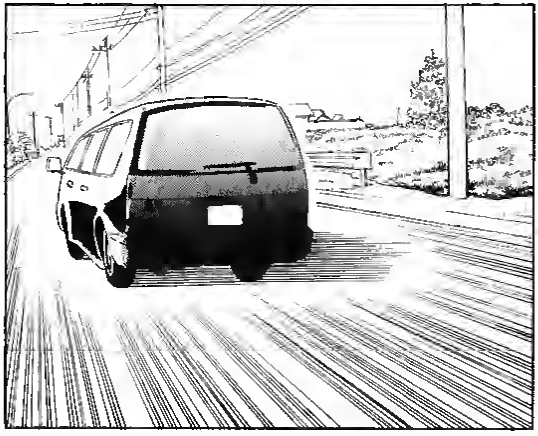


The vicinity of the Village of Swans is also a land where the Emishi were relocated to...
The "Chronicles of Hitachi Province" also tell of blacksmiths being used to make swords out of the iron sand in this area


There are many cases where the legend of the Swan Maiden or the White Robe coincides with the myth of Yamato Takeru, and one theory says that they were transmitted by people involved in iron manufacturing


Maezawa
ogawa
Hiraizumi
We'll reach Iwate by tomorrow. There's a Shiratori Shrine in Maezawa, north of Hiraizumi...



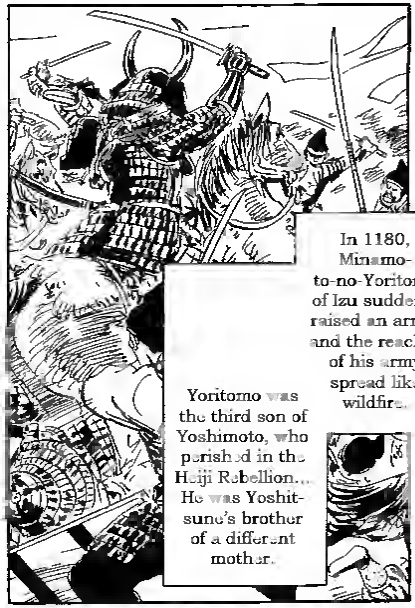


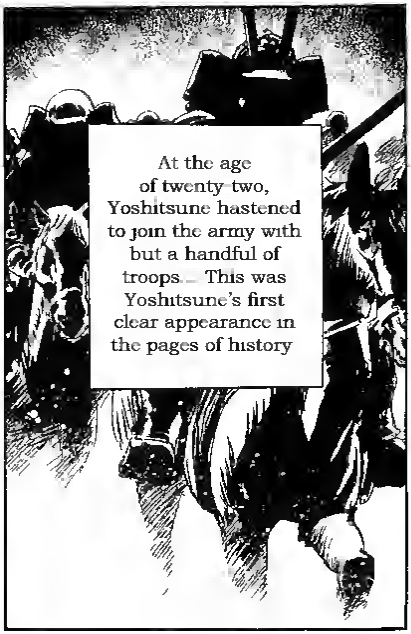
Swans and iron... All of this is reminding me of that bastard...

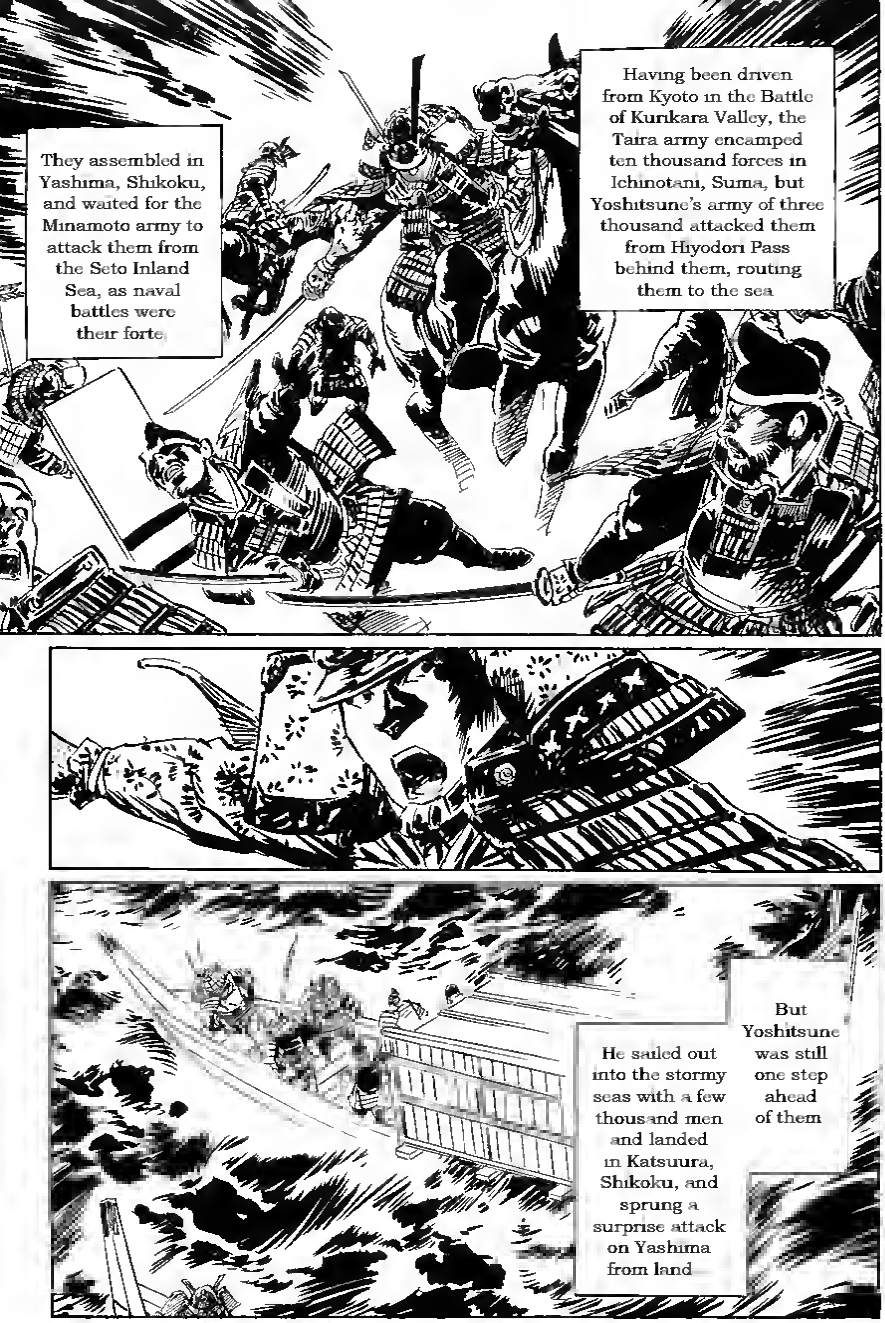
When Yoshitsune was welcomed by Fujiwara-no Hidehira in Hiraizumi and spent the next few years there, everything west of Kanto, with Kyoto in the center, was Taira territory. The samurai of the Minamoto clan were laying in the shadows, waiting for their chance to defeat the Taira.

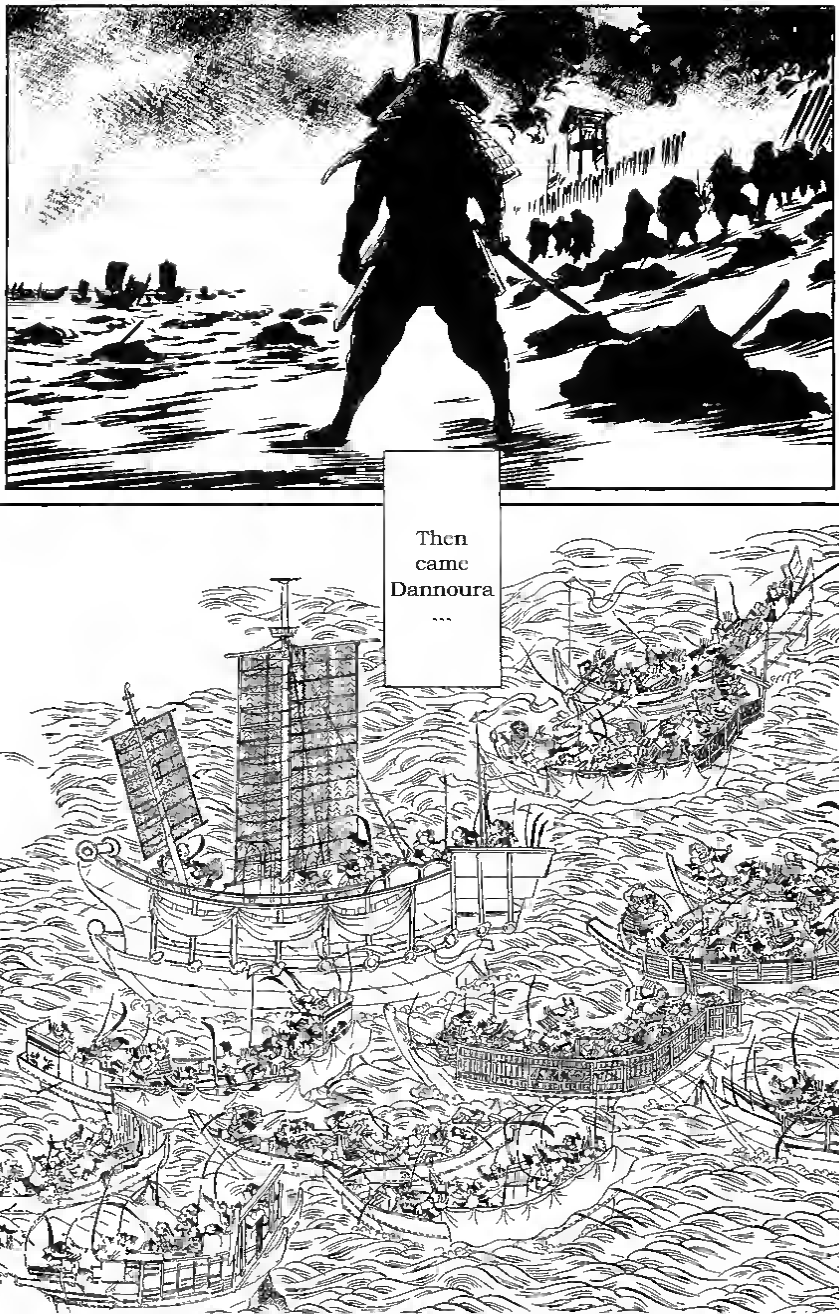
Hiraizumi
Fujiwara-no-Hidehira

Kyoto
Taira-no-Kiyomori


In 1180, Minamoto-no-Yoritomo of Izu suddenly raised an army, and the reaches of his army spread like wildfire.
Yoritomo was the third son of Yoshimoto, who perished in the Heiji Rebellion... He was Yoshitsune's brother of a different mother.

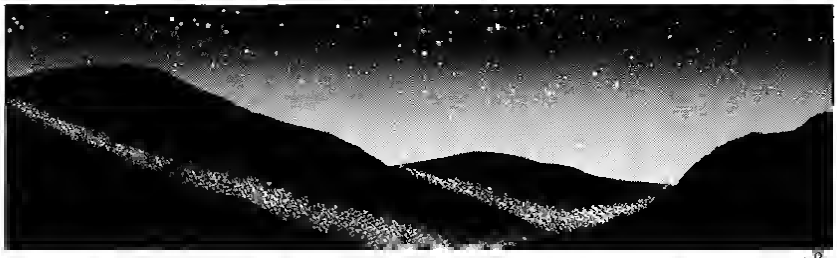

At the age of twenty-two, Yoshitsune hastened to join the army with but a handful of troops... This was Yoshitsune's first clear appearance in the pages of history


They assembled in Yashima, Shikoku, and waited for the Minamoto army to attack them from the Seto Inland Sea, as naval battles were their forte.
Having been driven from Kyoto in the Battle of Kurikara Valley, the Taira army encamped ten thousand forces in Ichinotani, Suma, but Yoshitsune's army of three thousand attacked them from Hiyodori Pass behind them, routing them to the sea
He sailed out into the stormy seas with a few thousand men and landed in Katsuura, Shikoku, and sprung a surprise attack on Yashima from land
But Yoshitsune was still one step ahead of them


Then
came
Dannoura
...

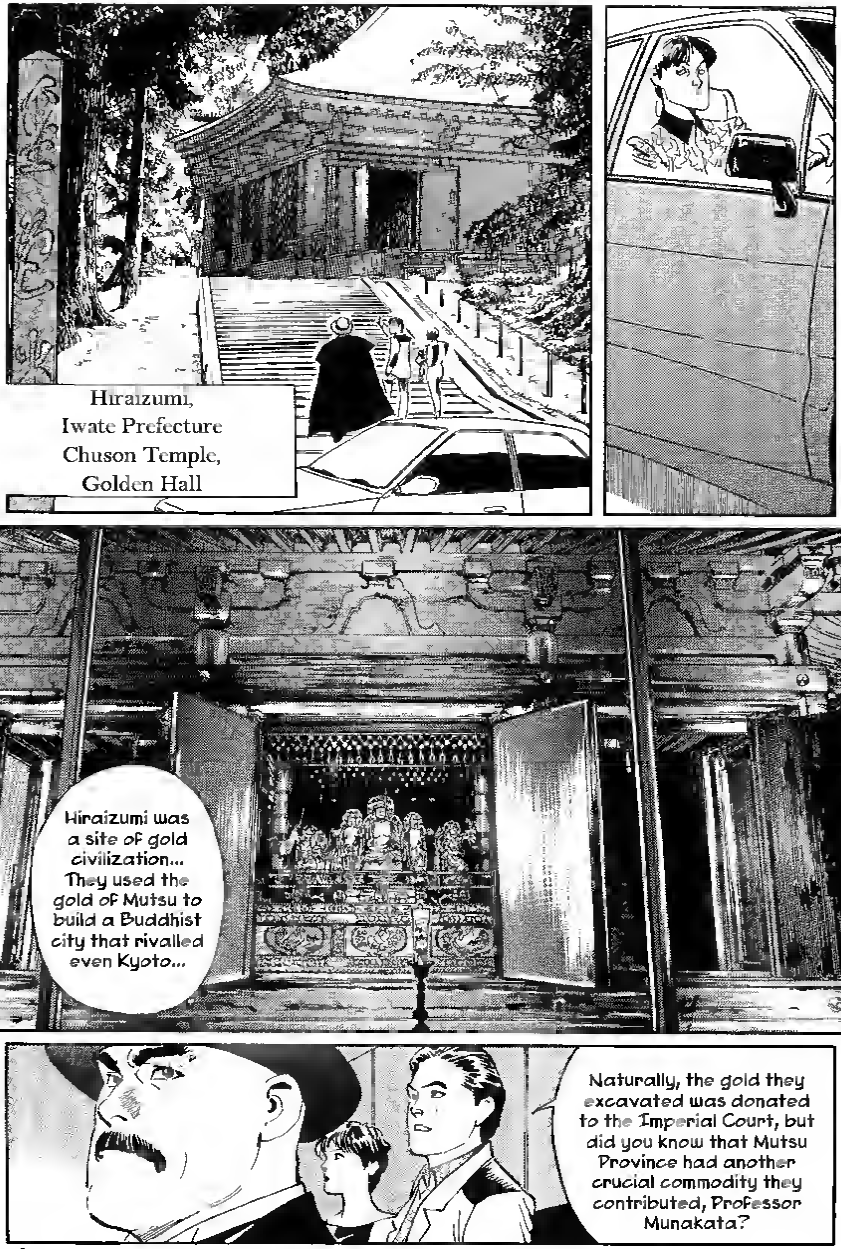
In no more than a year since his first battle, he had fought such brilliant battles to adorn the opening of the age of the samurai, with the tragedy of Emperor Antoku and the Taira Clan drowning in the sea in the background

One swipe of his sword could cut open his destiny... Minamoto-no-Yoshitsune, who would come to rouse the dreams of countless future samurai, was a shining ray of light

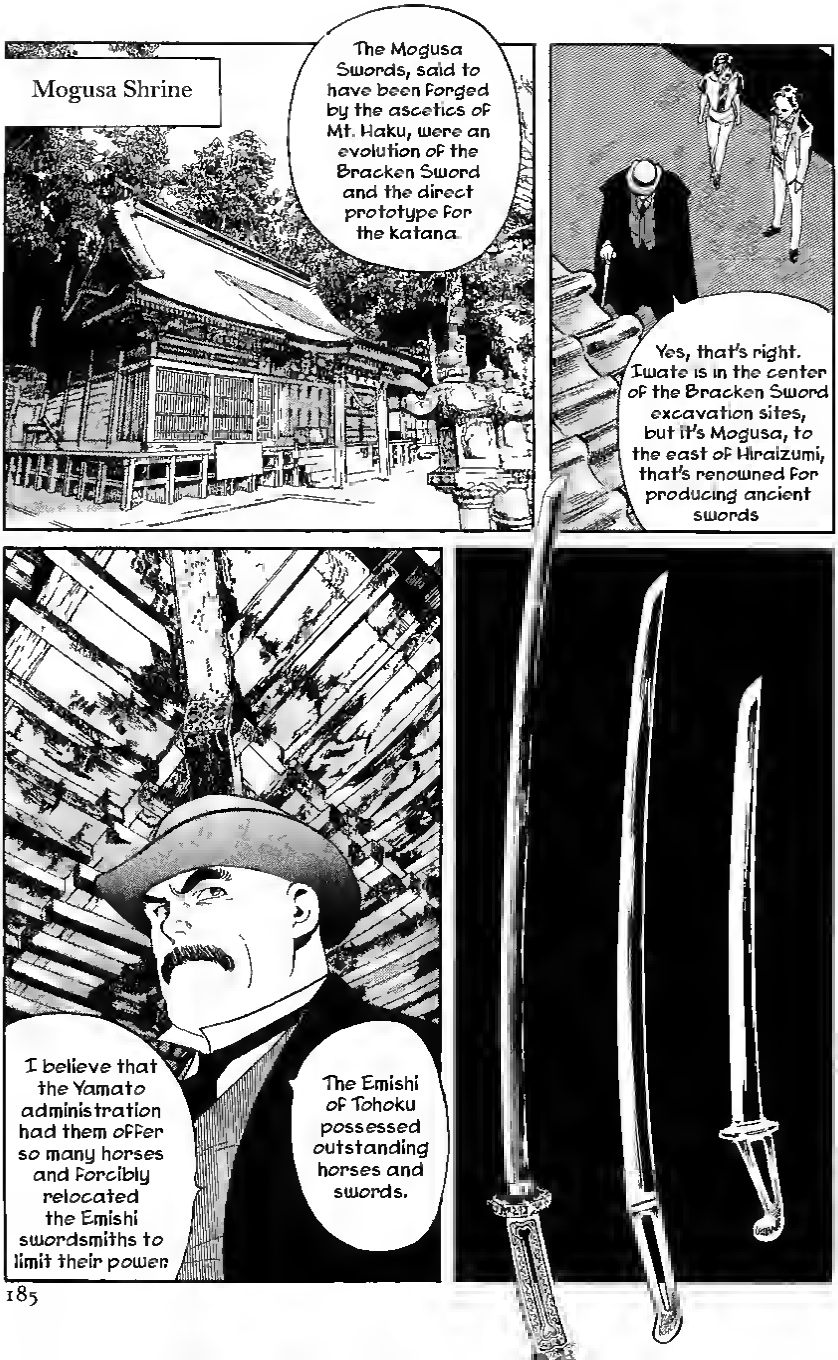


So this is Aizu...
Wasn't Aizu Fief the supporter of the Shinsengumi, Renami? They were the last Fief to hold out against the loyalists.
Not only that, but the Shinsengumi and Toshi himself fought here. They lost, though...
But he stuck to his samurai pride, even if the whole nation was against him...

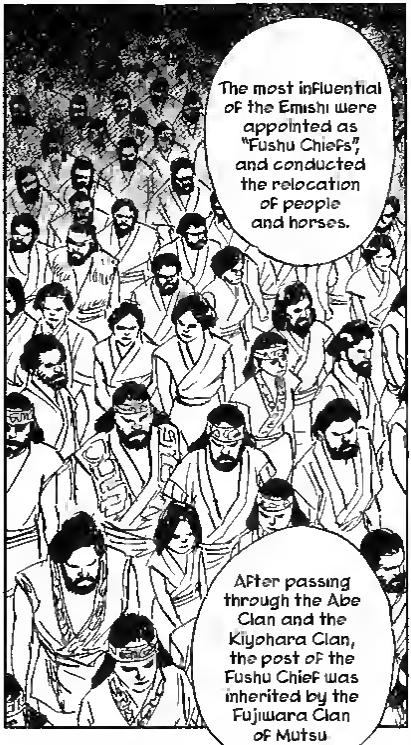
M...
Munakata
...?


Hiraizumi,
Iwate Prefecture
Chuson Temple,
Golden Hall
Hiraizumi was a site of gold civilization... They used the gold of Mutsu to build a Buddhist city that rivalled even Kyoto...
Naturally, the gold they excavated was donated to the Imperial Court, but did you know that Mutsu Province had another crucial commodity they contributed, Professor Munakata?

There are records of the Emishi presenting the Court with no less than a thousand horses in Yoro year 2...
The plains of Tohoku were the largest horse-rearing grounds in Japan, before they were covered with rice fields.
The ancient Emishi were an equestrian tribe.
So they were the forerunners of the mounted samurai.
Some say that the Emishi's Bracken Swords were designed so they could swipe at their enemies one-handed from horseback.
GRASSSLICE


Mogusa Shrine
The Mogusa Swords, said to have been forged by the ascetics of Mt. Haku, were an evolution of the Bracken Sword and the direct prototype for the katana.
Yes, that's right. Iwate is in the center of the Bracken Sword excavation sites, but it's Mogusa, to the east of Hiraizumi, that's renowned for producing ancient swords
I believe that the Yamato administration had them offer so many horses and forcibly relocated the Emishi swordsmiths to limit their power.
The Emishi of Tohoku possessed outstanding horses and swords.

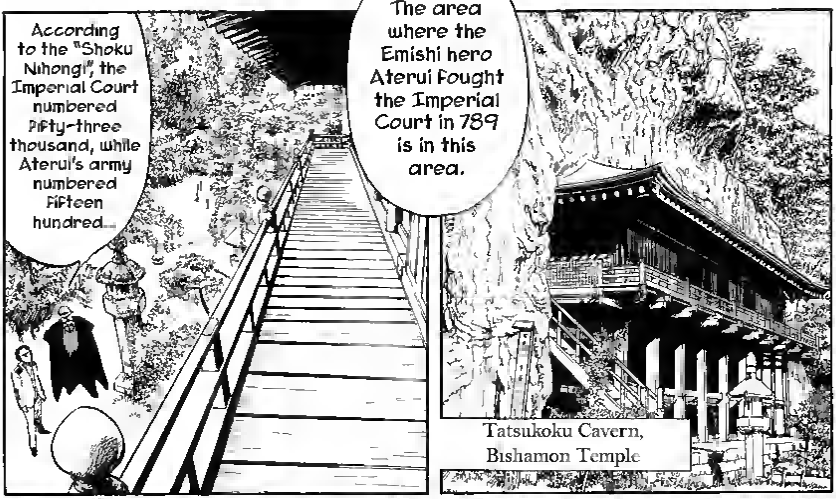
THEY TRAINED THE HORSES AS WARHORSES, AND ALLOCATED THE SWORDSMITHS TO IRON-RICH REGIONS AND HAD THEM CREATE SWORDS FOR THE YAMATO...
THE EMISHI'S FORCES WEAKENED WHILE THE IMPERIAL COURT WAS BOLSTERED. THIS MUST HAVE BEEN THE PURPOSE FOR EXILING THE FUSHU!


The most influential of the Emishi were appointed as "Fushu Chiefs", and conducted the relocation of people and horses.
After passing through the Abe Clan and the Kiyohara Clan, the post of the Fushu Chief was inherited by the Fujiwara Clan of Mutsu

...Whoa!

So they would need on-site magistrates to carry out this policy.

This would mean that for the years he lived in Hiraizumi, Yoshitsune was living in the midst of Emishi civilization!
Wooden scabbard buried in the Golden Hall
Ainu longsword

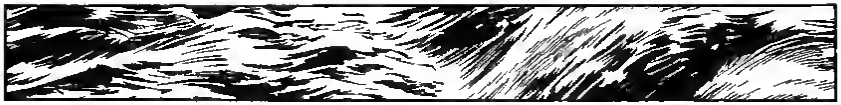

According to the "Shoku Nihongi", the Imperial Court numbered fifty-three thousand, while Aterui's army numbered fifteen hundred...
The area where the Emishi hero Aterui fought the Imperial Court in 789 is in this area.
Tatsukoku Cavern, Bishamon Temple

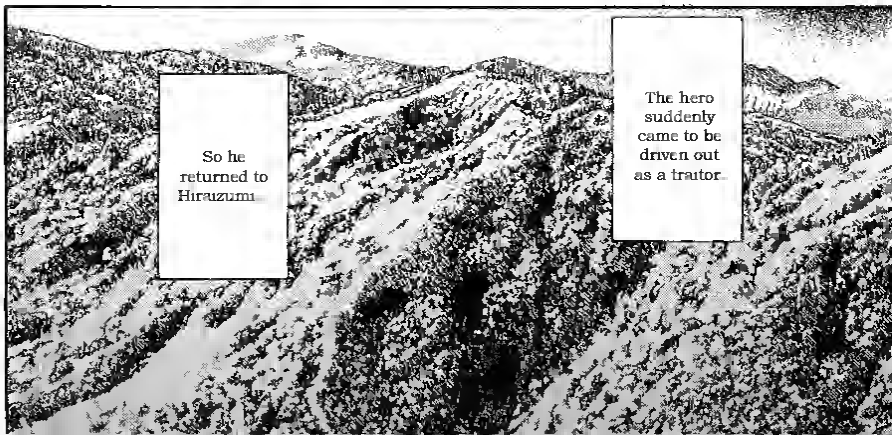
Yoshitsune must have learned Emishi tactics. That's the only way to explain his actions. Don't you think so?

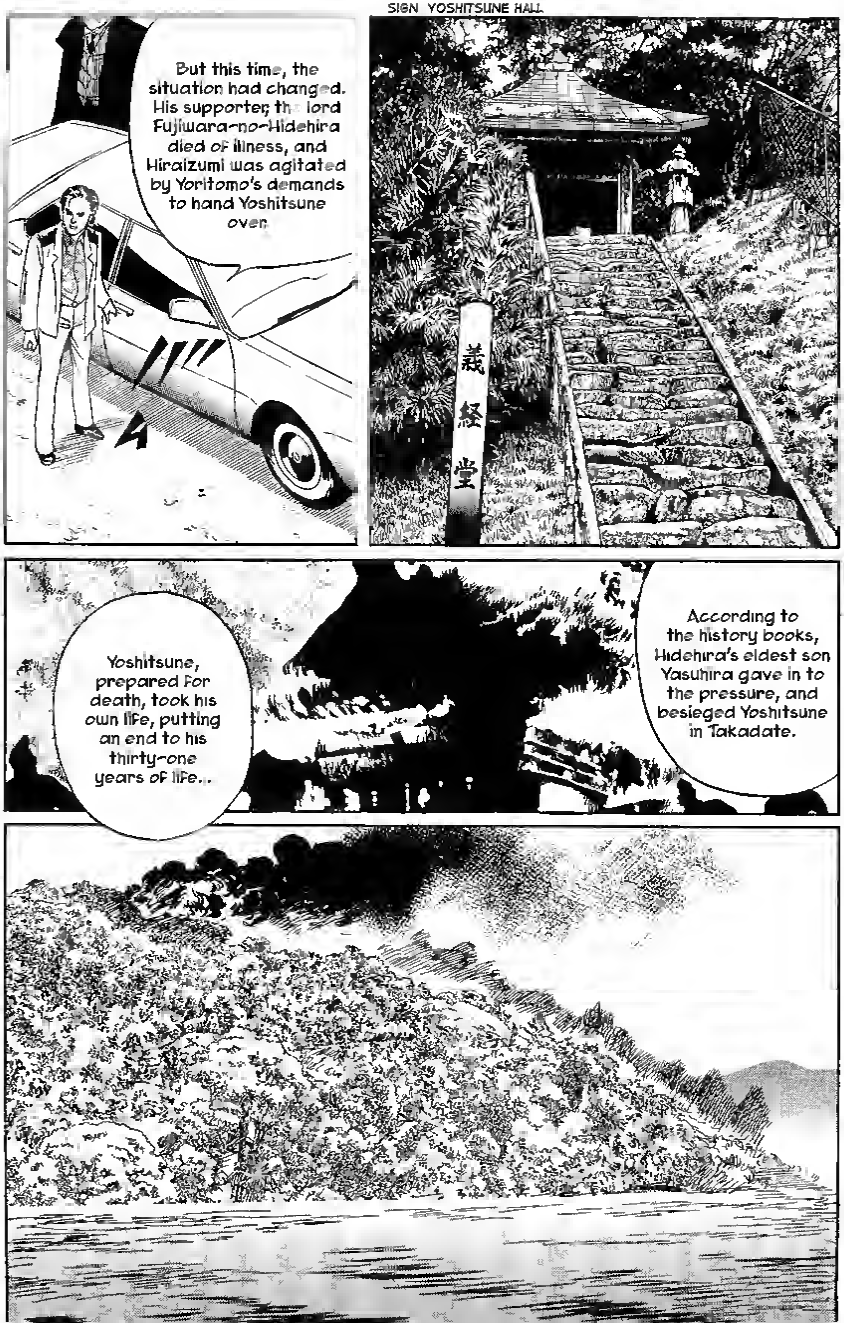
But the Imperial Court was defeated and routed by Aterui's elusive guerilla tactics.
They stayed one step ahead of the samurai's frontal attack, and defeated the many with few.

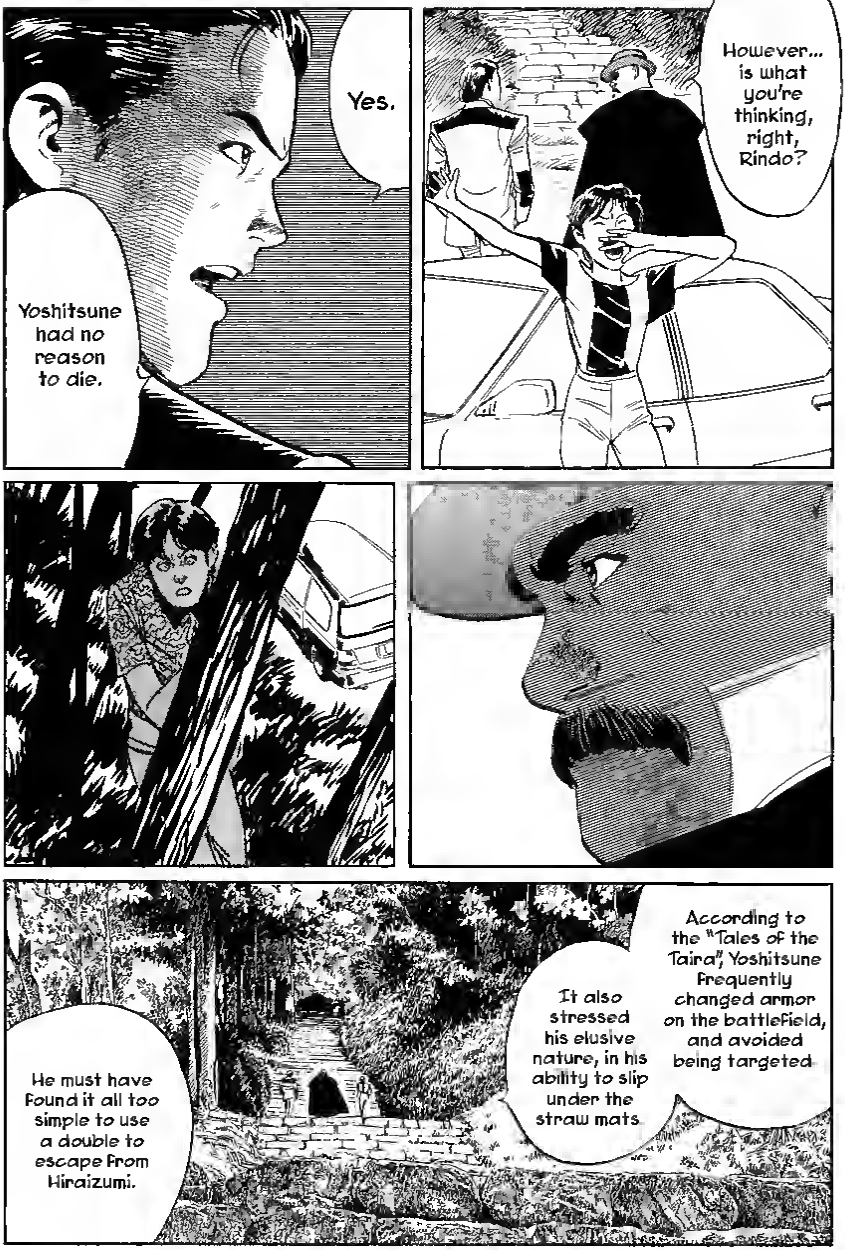
The plunge of Hiyodori Pass is certainly a tactic that the Emishi, who were used to the mountains, would have used. Hmm...
Yoshitsune may have obtained something even greater than gold in Hiraizumi.
While Yoshitsune was mingling with the Emishi and gaining inspiration from them, Minamoto-no-Yoritomo was in Kanto, trying to establish himself as the legitimate leader of the Minamoto Clan.
I believe this difference in personal histories must have been large, even tragically so..
Zzz ~...
The other man looks like Rindo Tsunekiyo.. He's the guy that's in trouble for "Minamoto-no-Yoshitsune's Ray of Light"...

For Minamoto, who was attempting to found a samurai government in Kamakura, Yoshitsune must have outlived his usefulness.
Yoshitsune was hailed in Kyoto as the hero that defeated the Taira, but his strategies and behaviors were far too arbitrary.

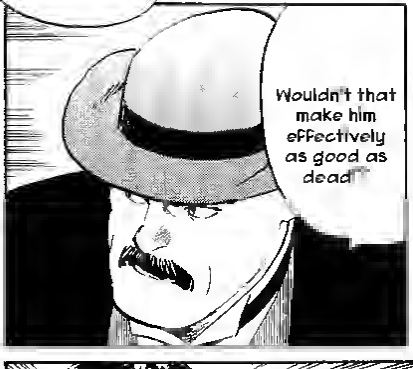


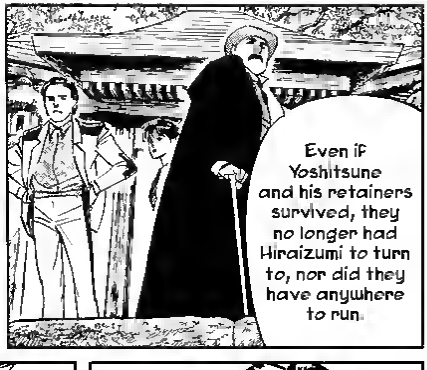

So he returned to Hiruzumi.
The hero suddenly came to be driven out as a traitor.


But this time, the situation had changed. His supporter, the lord Fujiwara-no-Hidehira died of illness, and Hiraizumi was agitated by Yoritomo's demands to hand Yoshitsune over.
SIGN YOSHITSUNE HALL
義経堂
Yoshitsune, prepared for death, took his own life, putting an end to his thirty-one years of life...
According to the history books, Hidehira's eldest son Yasuhira gave in to the pressure, and besieged Yoshitsune in Takadate.


Yes.
Yoshitsune had no reason to die.
However... is what you're thinking, right, Rindo?
He must have found it all too simple to use a double to escape from Hiraizumi.
It also stressed his elusive nature, in his ability to slip under the straw mats.
According to the "Tales of the Taira", Yoshitsune frequently changed armor on the battlefield, and avoided being targeted.

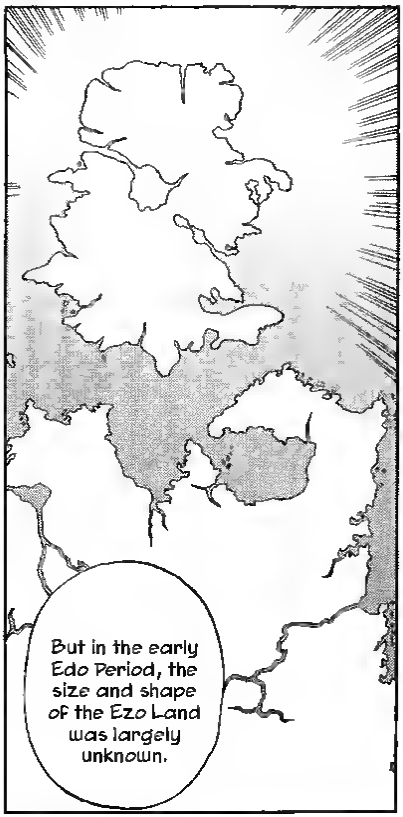
Hmm... Meanwhile the head delivered to Kamakura as Yoshitsune's was burnt and rotted to the point that it was indiscriminable.
But soon after Yoritomo raised all his forces throughout Japan and besieged Hiraizumi. The golden civilization perished far too quickly.

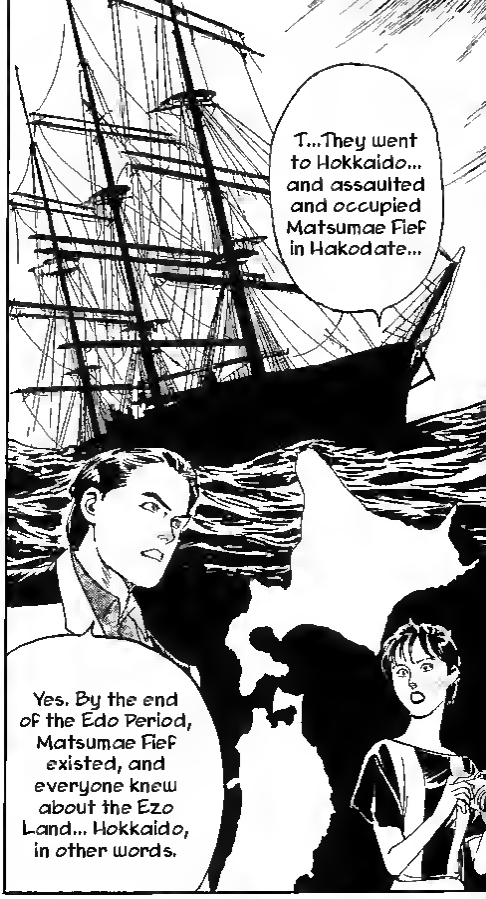

Wouldn't that make him effectively as good as dead?


Even if Yoshitsune and his retainers survived, they no longer had Hiraizumi to turn to, nor did they have anywhere to run.

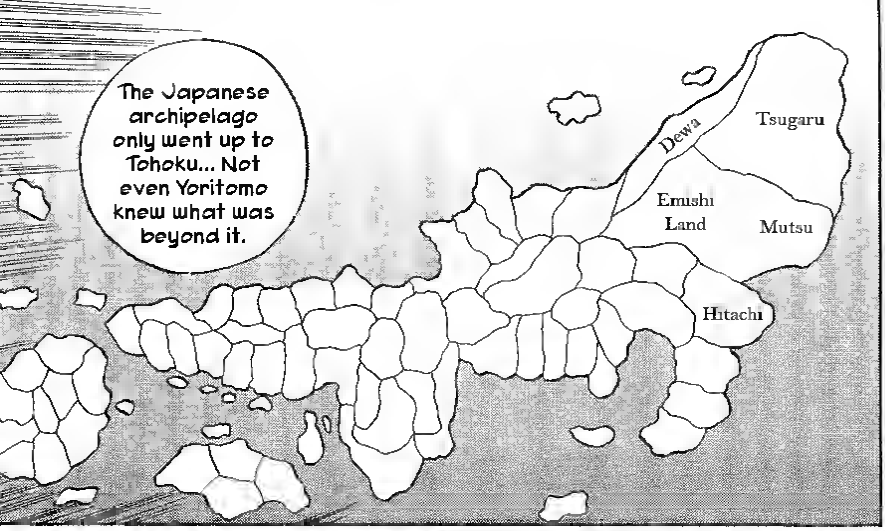
Renami!
What happened to Hijikata Toshizo and the Shinsengumi after their defeat?
Huuuh !?

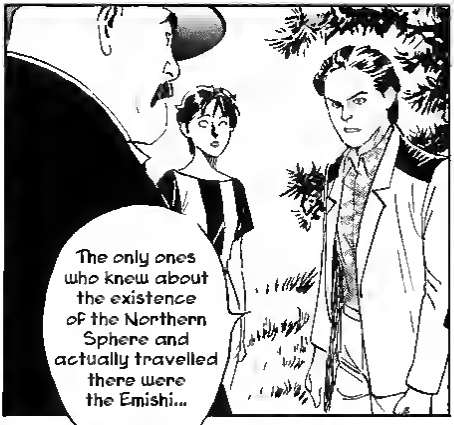
That's what Yoritomo would've thought.


But in the early Edo Period, the size and shape of the Ezo Land was largely unknown.

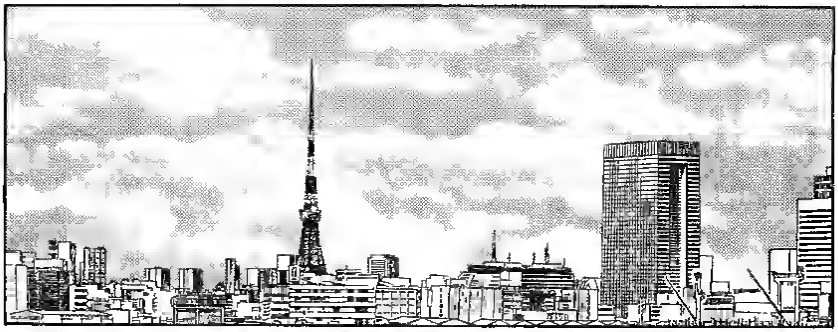

T...They went to Hokkaido... and assaulted and occupied Matsumae Fief in Hakodate...
Yes. By the end of the Edo Period, Matsumae Fief existed, and everyone knew about the Ezo Land... Hokkaido, in other words.

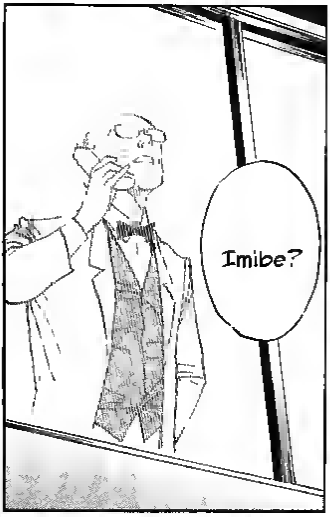
As for before the Warring States Period...


The Japanese archipelago only went up to Tohoku... Not even Yoritomo knew what was beyond it.
Dewa
Tsugaru
Emishi Land
Mutsu
Hitachi


The only ones who knew about the existence of the Northern Sphere and actually travelled there were the Emishi...

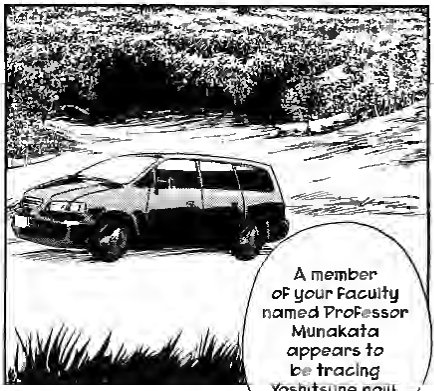
...And Yoshitsune knew of it...!




Imibe?

...What's this? Who are you...?
East Asia University of Culture

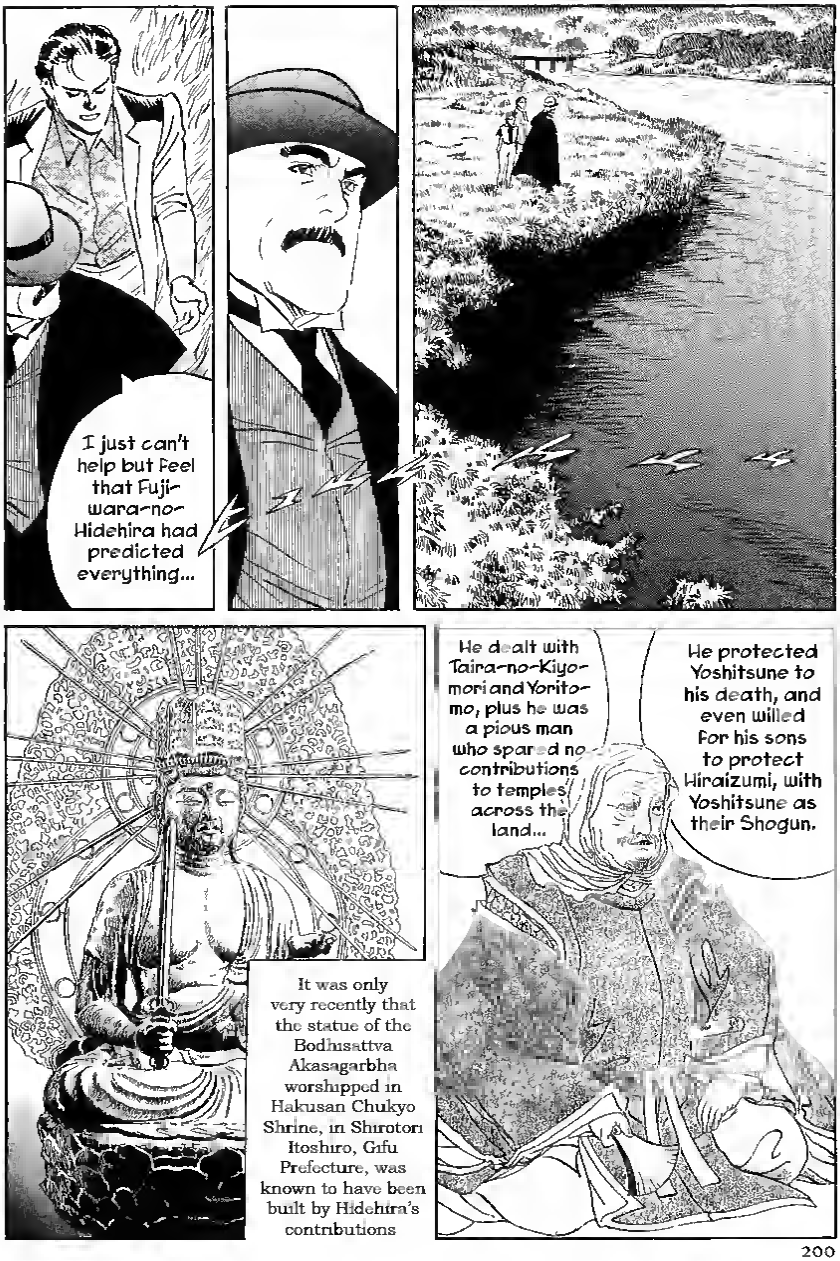
He's with that Rindo Tsunekiyo. You remember him? He's actually considering whether or not Yoshitsune actually survived... Are you okay with this?


A member of your faculty named Professor Munakata appears to be tracing Yoshitsune now.

Lo!
Heh-heh-he...
The theory of Yoshitsune's survival is a fallacy that's been academically eliminated long ago.
I was just a little worried whether a professor treating such a fallacy seriously would harm the reputation of your university.
Is something the matter, President Tatebayashi?
I guess Professor Munakata never learns.
Didn't he just cause a problem at the last Faculty meeting with his erratic hypotheses and books?
Munakata?

He's received countless warnings from all of the leading folklorists in the country, and I myself had to reprimand him.
I had him promise to approach his field of research more seriously.
Otherwise we would have to think of an academic punishment of some sort...
I just received this in the mail today.
Oh, a request for an indefinite leave of absence?
Request for Leave of Absence
He was a self-conceited, unendearing man who refused to affiliate with academic cliques, but this time he's finally resigned.

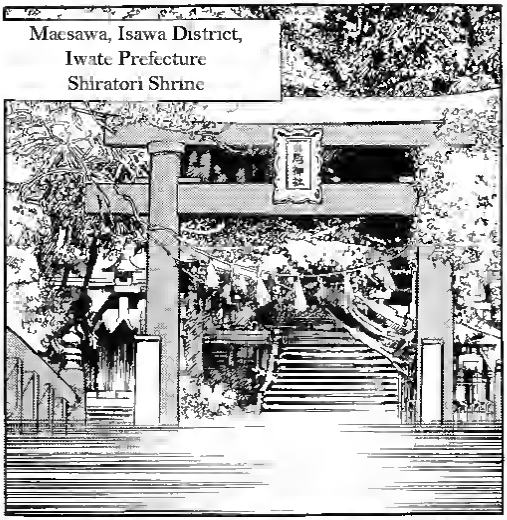
Let us see him sacrifice himself for Yoshitsune...
perhaps he's more similar to Musashibo Benkei. Hahaha!
He's just like Yoshitsune fleeing the capital... No,

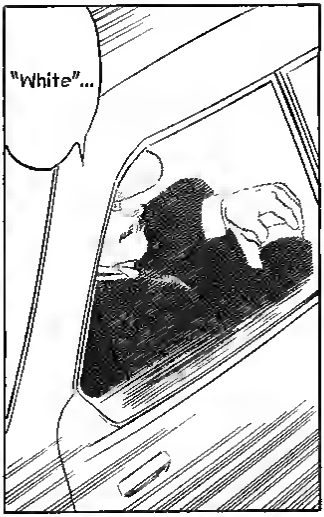

I just can't help but feel that Fujiwara-no-Hidehira had predicted everything...
He protected Yoshitsune to his death, and even willed for his sons to protect Hiraizumi, with Yoshitsune as their Shogun.
He dealt with Taira-no-Kiyomori and Yoritomo, plus he was a pious man who spared no contributions to temples across the land...
It was only very recently that the statue of the Bodhisattva Akasagarbha worshipped in Hakusan Chukyo Shrine, in Shirotori Itoshiro, Gifu Prefecture, was known to have been built by Hidehira's contributions

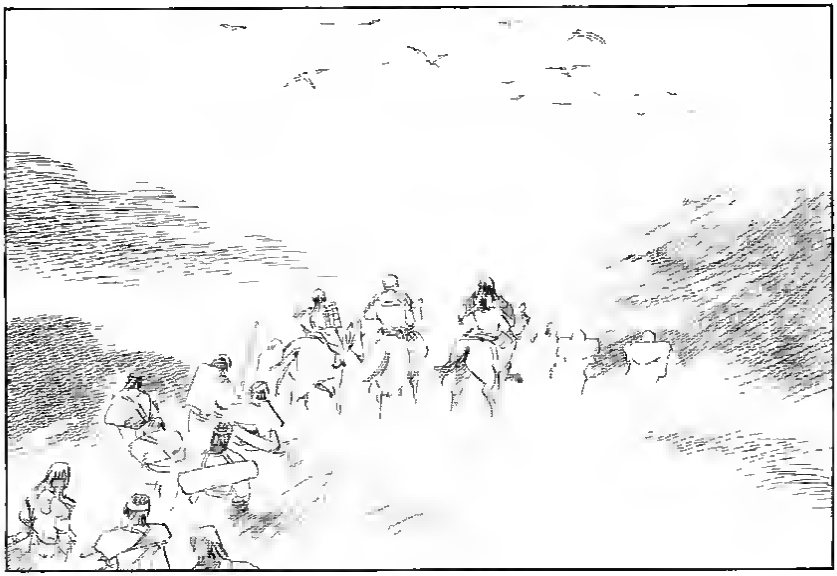
And surprisingly enough, the retainers that carried the statue from Hiraizumi settled there, and continued to guard the statue as the "Kamimura Twelve" for eight hundred years.
Hidehira's retainers have faithfully fulfilled their mission to this day.
He had his retainers take up permanent residence in other lands, along with Buddhist statues..
If Hidehira was a man who would take such scrupulous and grand Fore-thought, it wouldn't be a stretch to assume that he assigned an elite guard loyal to Yoshitsune.
One that would follow Yoshitsune wherever he went, should the worst happen...

Ike, your boyfriend has some rather amusing thoughts. I'm starting to look forward to what's to come.
.....
I can't help but think of that last place name.
Hakusan Chukyo Shrine, in Shirotori Itoshiro, Gifu Prefecture...
We're going to cut across Tohoku now. We'll stay somewhere overnight and head for Aomori tomorrow.
Hakusan Shrine is the tutelary shrine of Hiraizumi. Mogusa Shrine also worships Hakusan Myori Gongen...

Speaking of Hakusan Shrine, it's also connected to the Mt. Haku Ascetics of Kaga.
They say that the name "Hiraizumi" itself came from Heisen Temple in Hakusan Shrine, in Katsuyama City, Fukui Prefecture.
And strangely enough, they follow all the Fushu Villages across the land.
The iron people must have gathered many different faiths besides Bishamonten
Even the Minamoto Clan had a white flag...
!!
Come to think of it, aren't there a lot of places in Tohoku with "white" in the name?
Shiroishi, Shirakawa, Shirataka, Shiraiwa...





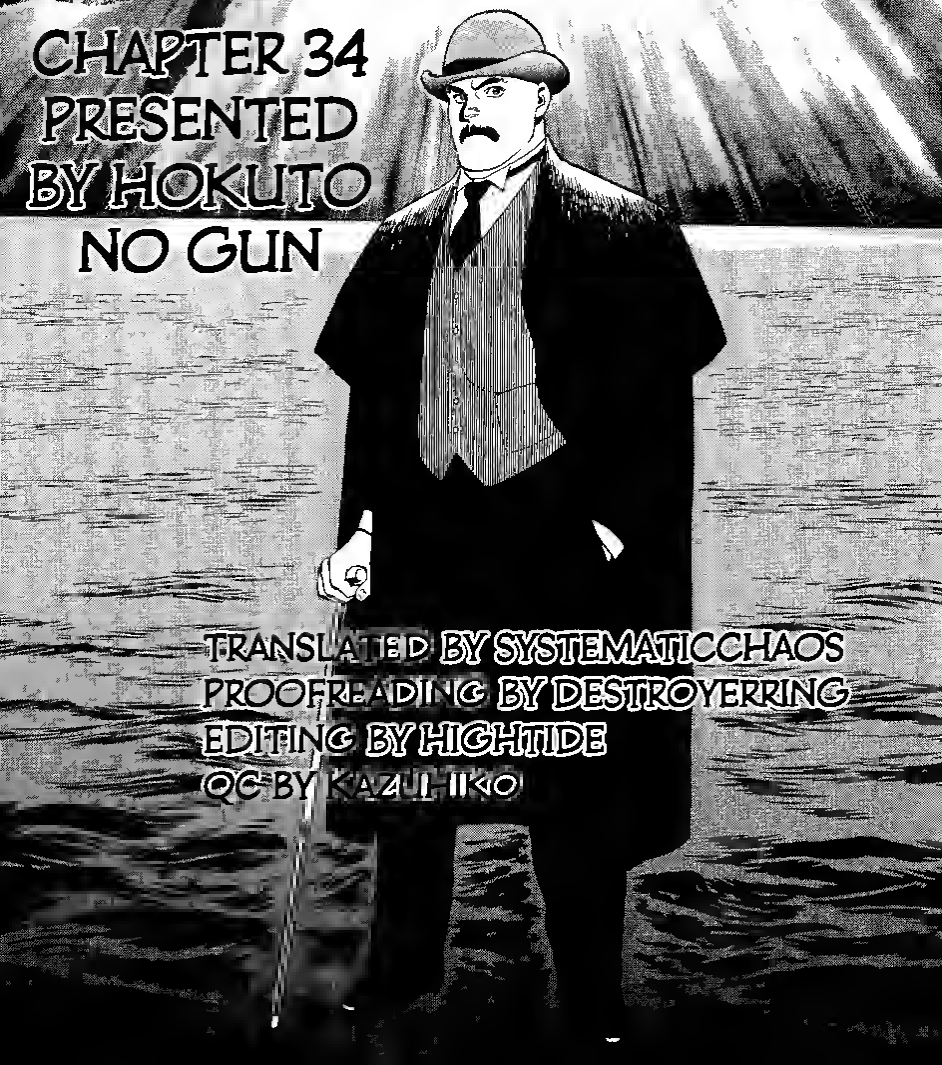


File 34: The Meteor Sword: Part Two – END

THE LEGENDARY MUSINGS OF PROFESSOR MUNAKATA

CHAPTER 34

PRESENTED BY HOKUTO NO GUN



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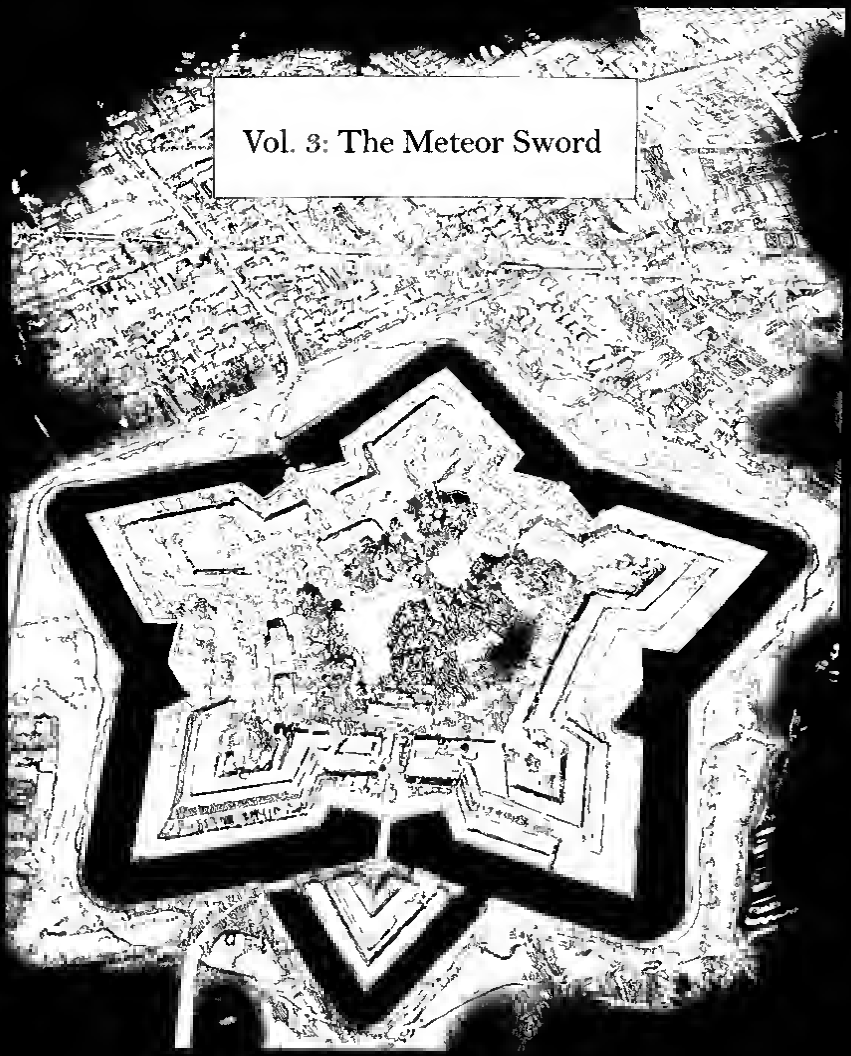
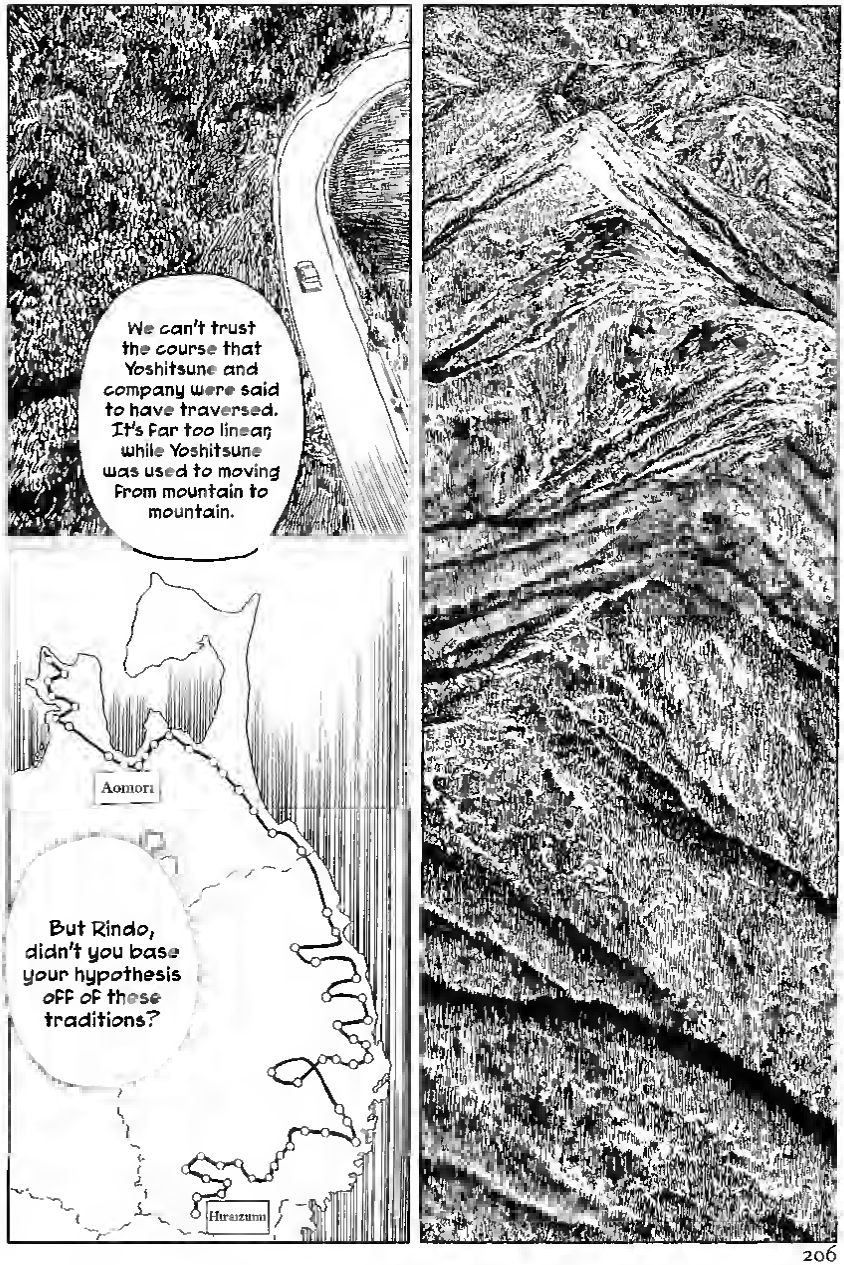
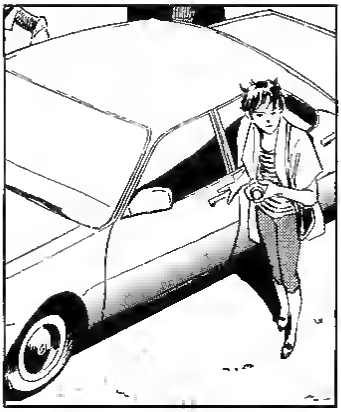
PROOFREADING BY DESTROYERRING
EDITING BY HIGHTIDE
QC BY KAZUHIKO

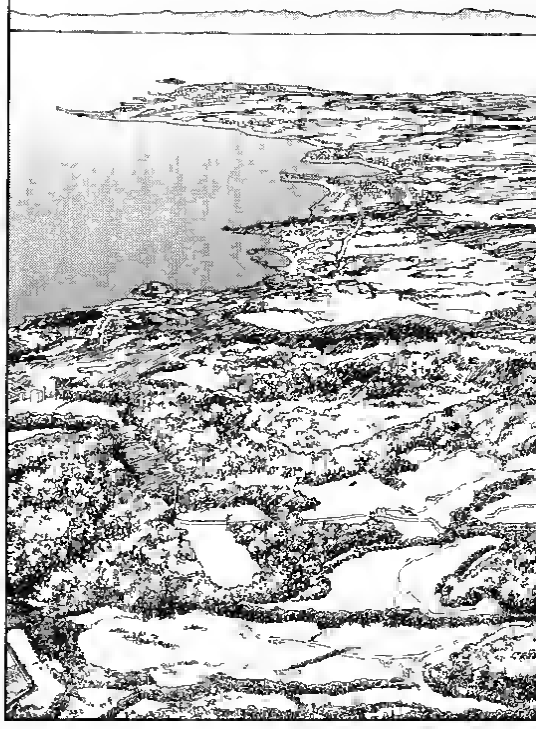
File 35: The Meteor Sword: Part Three




We can't trust the course that Yoshitsune and company were said to have traversed. It's far too linear, while Yoshitsune was used to moving from mountain to mountain.
Aomori
But Rindo, didn't you base your hypothesis off of these traditions?
Hiraizumi

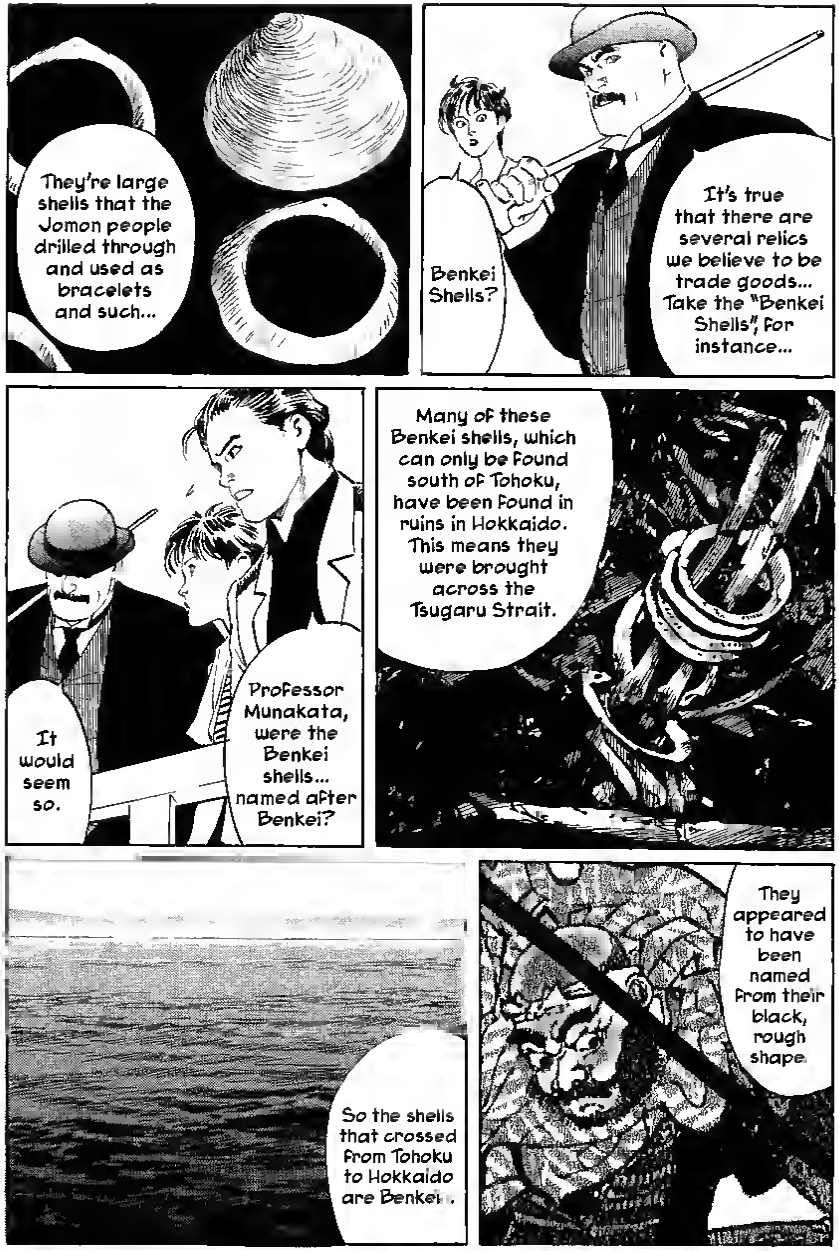
You can find Ono-no-Komachi's grave all over Japan, and there are several graves for Xu Fu and Yang Kwei-Fei.
Take, for instance, the fact that Toyotomi Hideyoshi died in the Siege of Osaka, but he has an alleged grave in Kagoshima...
Don't you find it strange, Professor Munakata?
What the traditions indirectly prove is that Yoshitsune didn't die.
But Yoshitsune is different. He has no grave in Hiraizumi, and as I mentioned, all these legends tell only of the route he passed through. He has no final resting place.
Each of these places have a tradition that they are the final resting place of a celebrity or hero, but none of them deny the fact of their death.
Does that convince you, Professor?
Well, I'll admit that it's a mystery that Tohoku even has a grave for Jesus Christ, yet not for Yoshitsune...



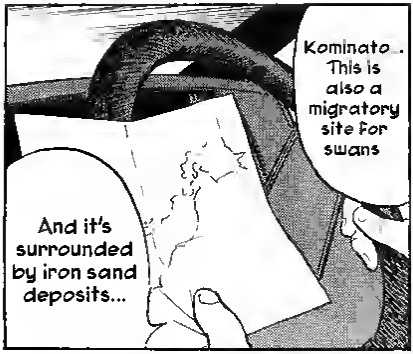


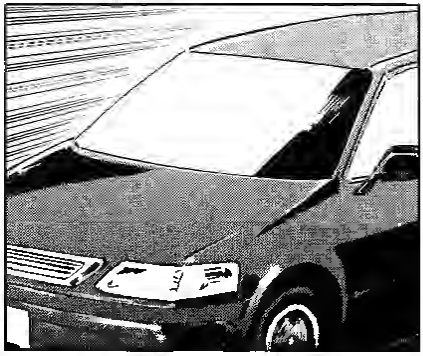
Oma Cape, Shimokita Peninsula, Aomori Prefecture

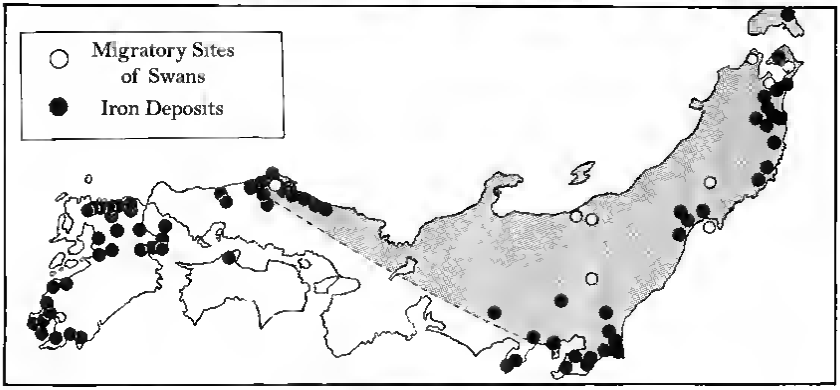
The Tsugaru Strait is barely 20km across from here. With the opposing coast so visible, people would have gone across it. There must have been crossings taking place since the Jomon era.

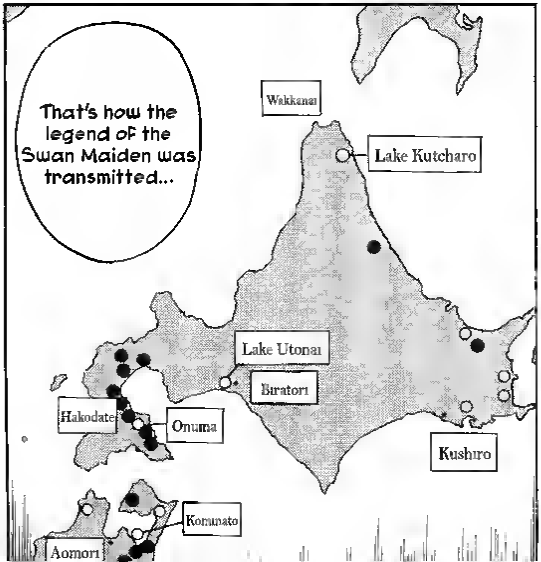

They're large shells that the Jomon people drilled through and used as bracelets and such...
Benkei Shells?
It's true that there are several relics we believe to be trade goods... Take the "Benkei Shells", for instance...
It would seem so.
Professor Munakata, were the Benkei shells... named after Benkei?
Many of these Benkei shells, which can only be found south of Tohoku, have been found in ruins in Hokkaido. This means they were brought across the Tsugaru Strait.
So the shells that crossed from Tohoku to Hokkaido are Benkei...
They appeared to have been named from their black, rough shape.

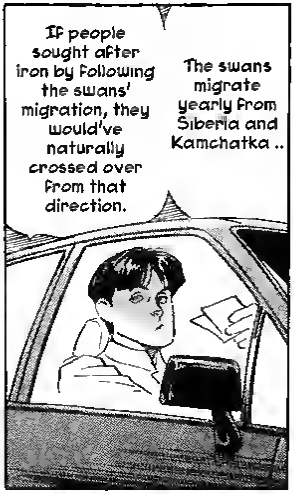
There wasn't a single place in all of Honshu where Yoshitsune could live in peace.
There was the Abe Clan here in Tsugaru. They were ruled by Fujiwara-no-Hirahide's brother, but they later submitted to Yoritomo.
Were there any other clans in Tohoku that may have hidden Yoshitsune?
He really shared the same fate as the Shinsengumi...

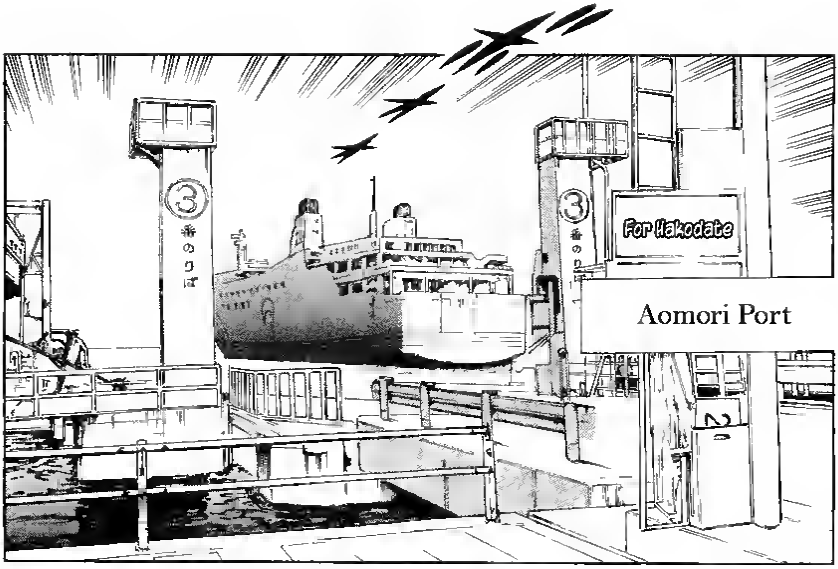

Kominato. This is also a migratory site for swans
And it's surrounded by iron sand deposits...

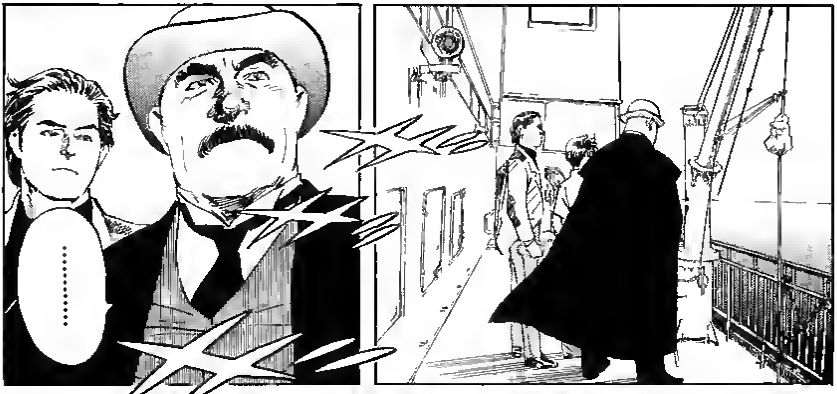



Migratory Sites of Swans
Iron Deposits


That's how the legend of the Swan Maiden was transmitted...
Wakkanai
Lake Kutcharo
Lake Utonai
Biratori
Hakodate
Onuma
Kushiro
Kominato
Aomori


If people sought after iron by following the swans' migration, they would've naturally crossed over from that direction.
The swans migrate yearly from Siberia and Kamchatka ..


For Hakodate
Aomori Port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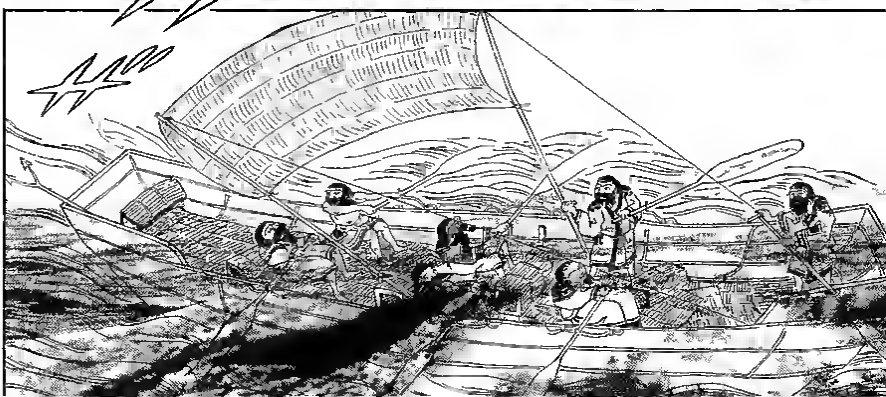
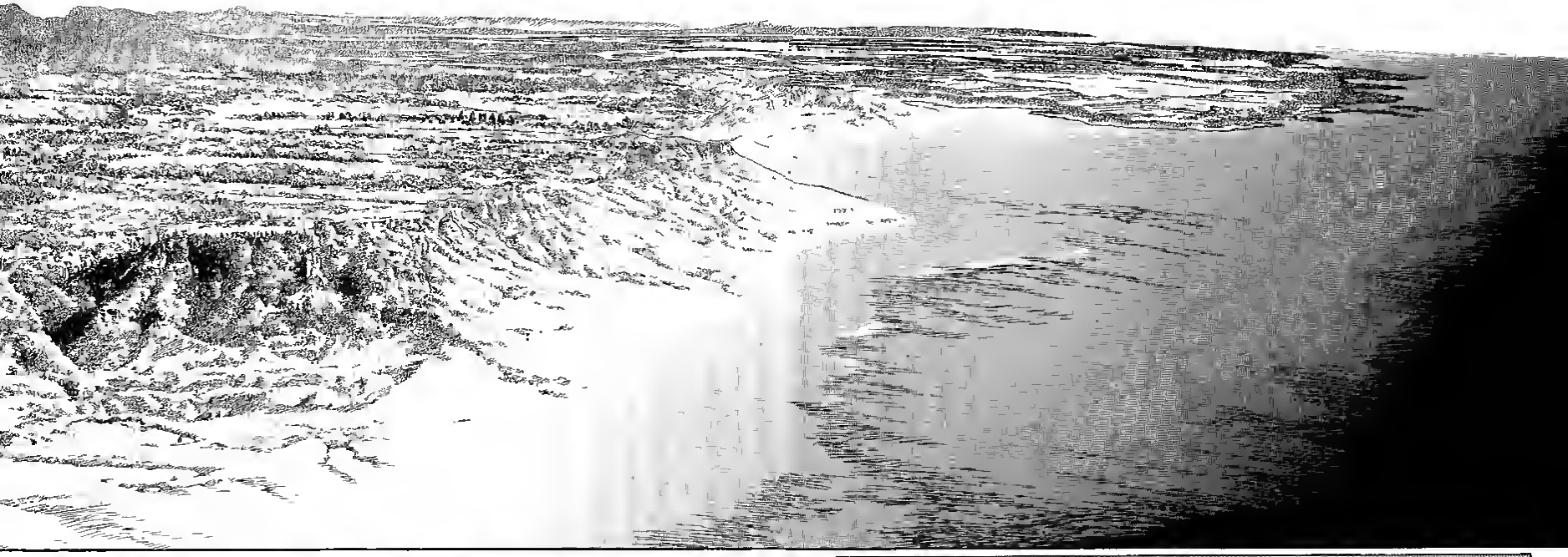
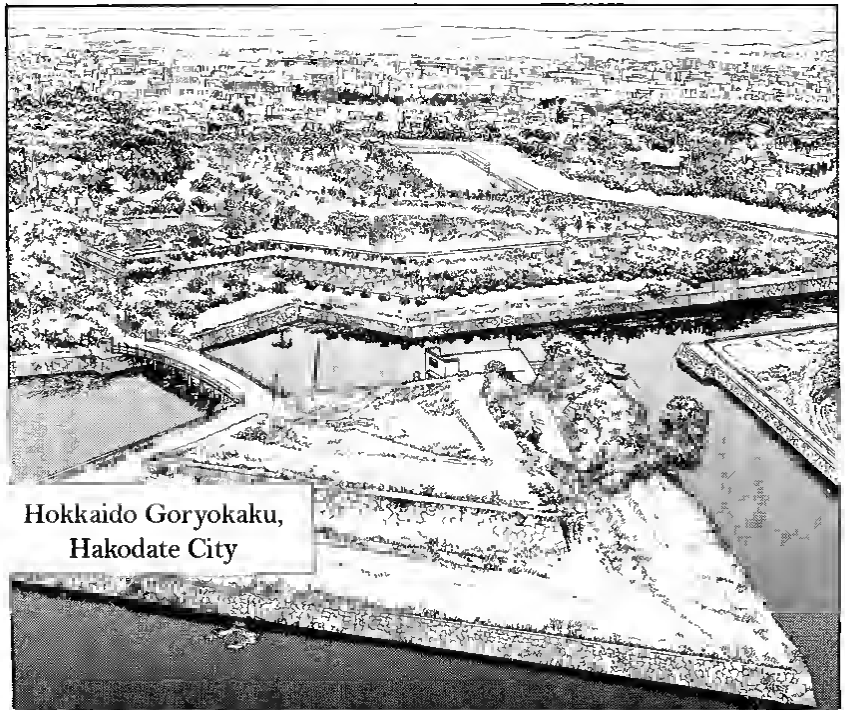
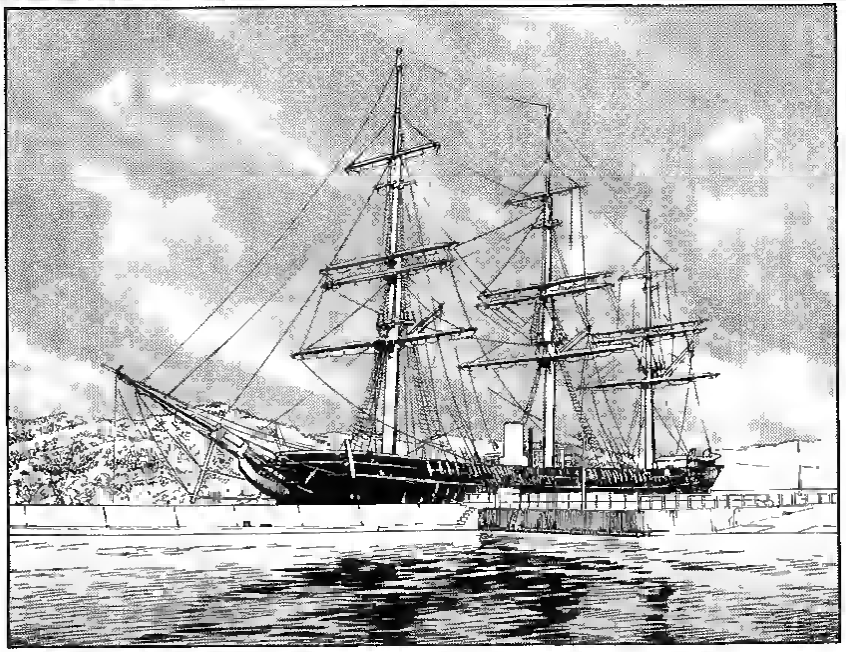
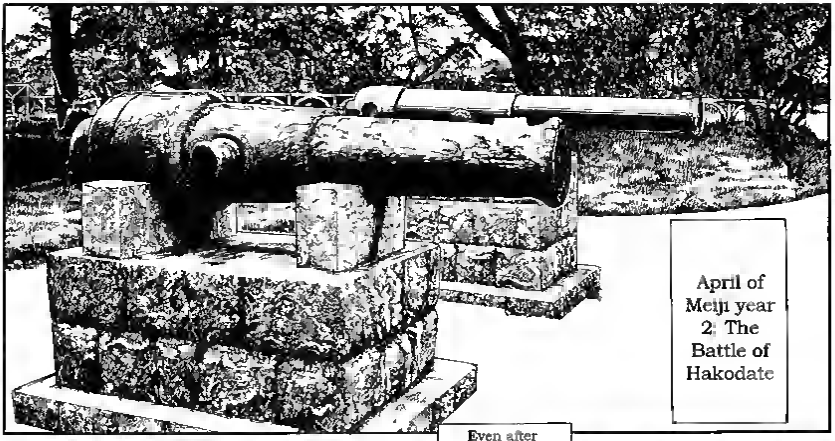




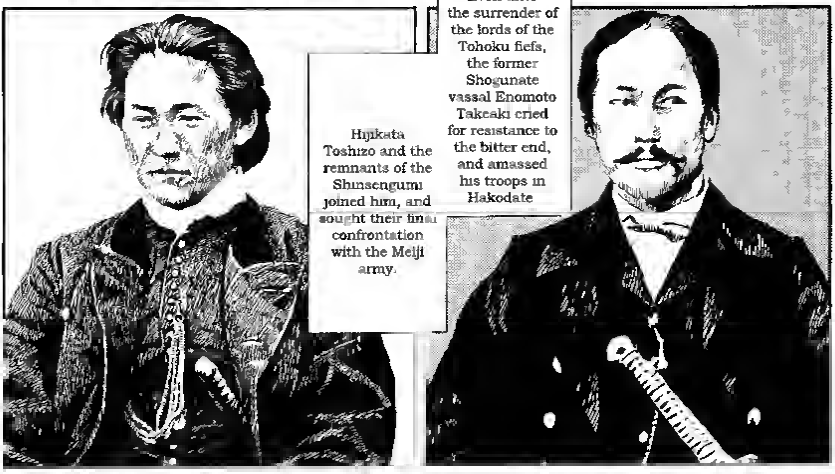


Hokkaido Goryokaku,
Hakodate City



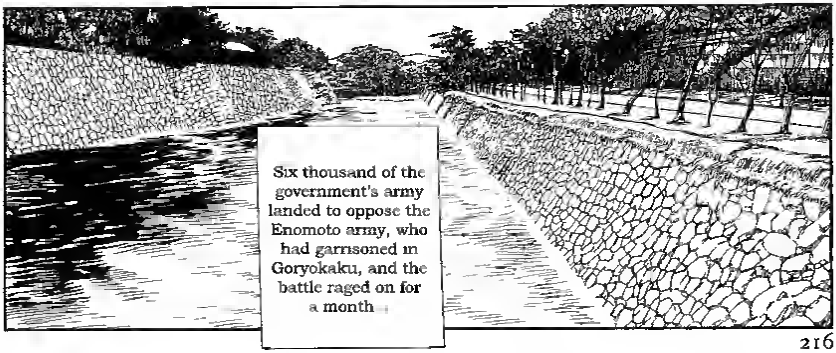


April of Meiji year 2: The Battle of Hakodate

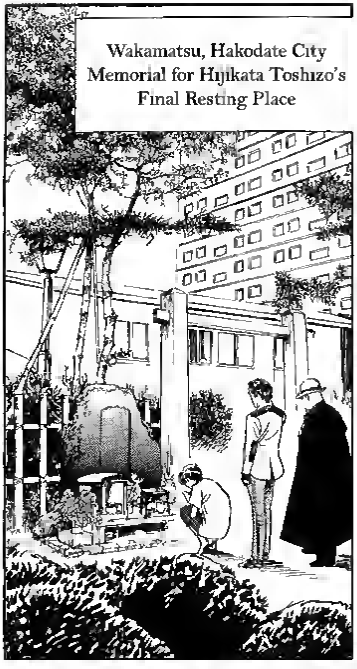


Even after the surrender of the lords of the Tohoku fiefs, the former Shogunate vassal Enomoto Takeaki cried for resistance to the bitter end, and amassed his troops in Hakodate

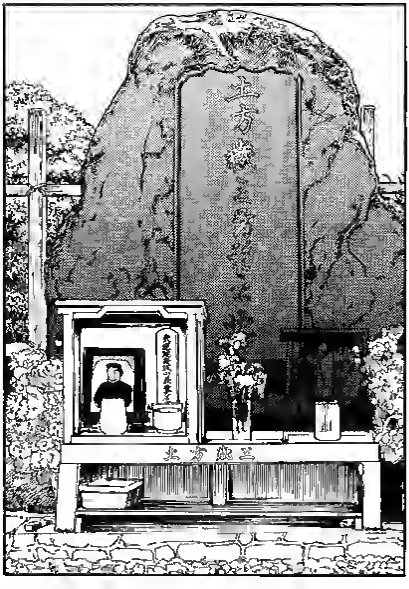
Hijikata Toshizo and the remnants of the Shinsengumi joined him, and sought their final confrontation with the Meiji army.



Six thousand of the government's army landed to oppose the Enomoto army, who had garrisoned in Goryokaku, and the battle raged on for a month.


Wakamatsu, Hakodate City
Memorial for Hijikata Toshizo's
Final Resting Place

On May 11, Hijikata Toshizo sallied forth alone on horseback, with his sword drawn, and was slain... Six days later, the Enomoto army issued their unconditional surrender

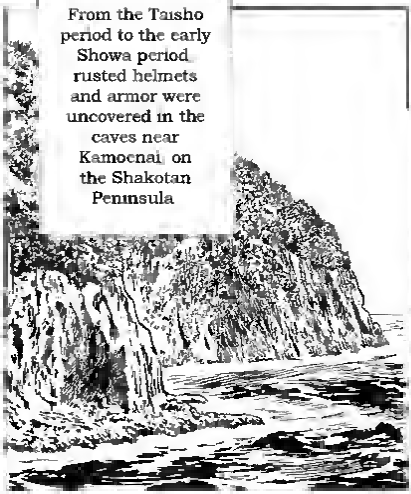


Sorry about the detour; I know it has nothing to do with the subject at hand...
That's not true. There may be more commonalities between Minamoto-no-Yoshitsune and Hijikata Toshizo than we thought.
Rindo...
They were samurai who would continue to fight with their sword alone, even should all of Japan become their enemy...
They both fought brilliant battles based in Kyoto for a short period of time, but eventually they escaped to the north as their destiny took them...

If Minamoto-no-Yoshitsune truly crossed the Tsugaru Straight, what kind of dream did he have at stake...?
Whether or not he was earnest about it, Enomoto Takeaki had the idea of an independent Ezo Land, and Hijikata Toshizo was on board with that.
The same?
...It may have been the same as Hijikata Toshizo's.
We'll head for Biratori, just ahead of Tomakomai, tomorrow. It's the home of Ainu culture, and it may have been the first place that Yoshitsune visited...

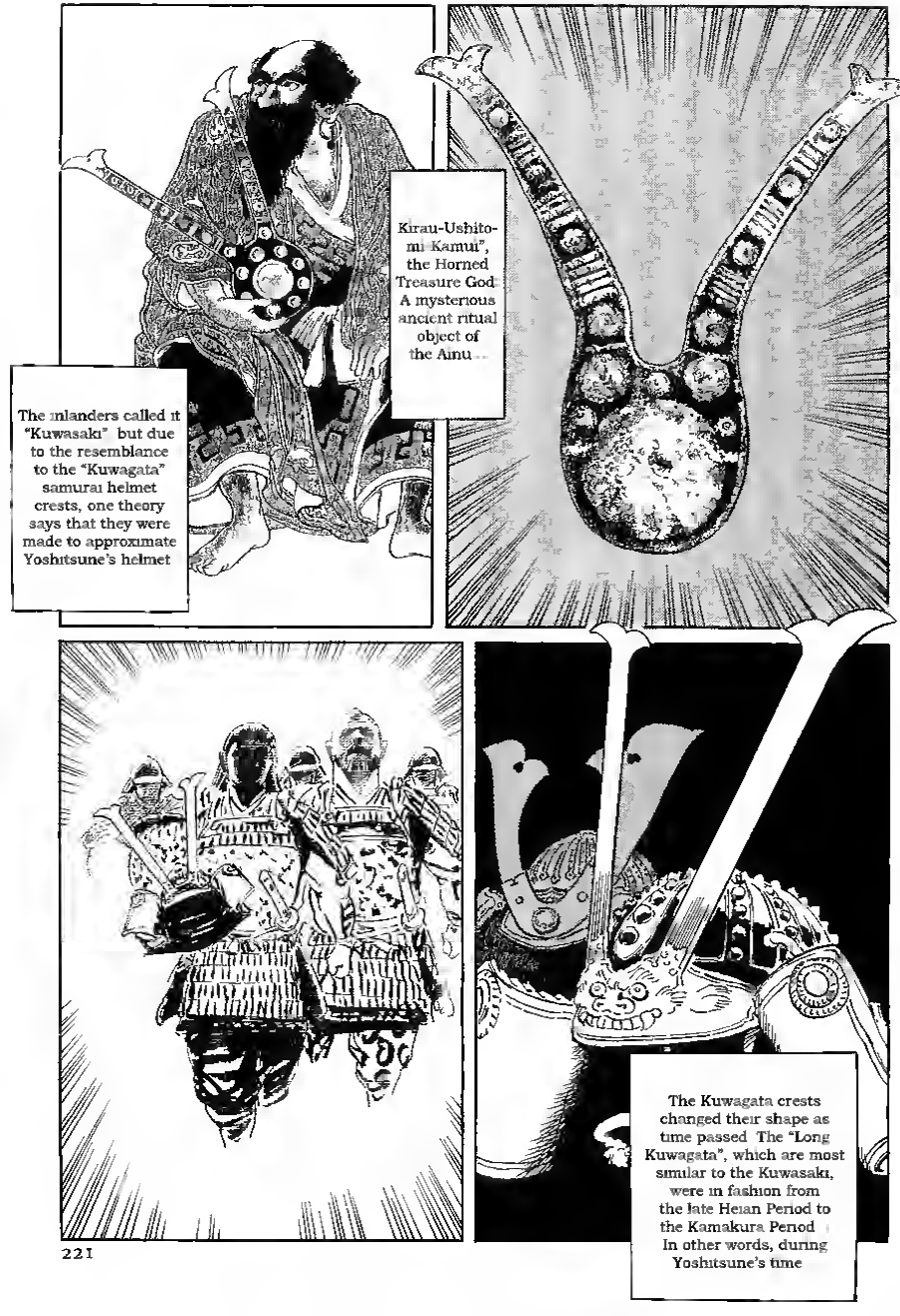
Since similar helmets had been preserved at Motsu Temple in Hiraizumi, they are presumed to be from the same time period as Yoshitsune

From the Taisho period to the early Showa period, rusted helmets and armor were uncovered in the caves near Kamoenai, on the Shakotan Peninsula

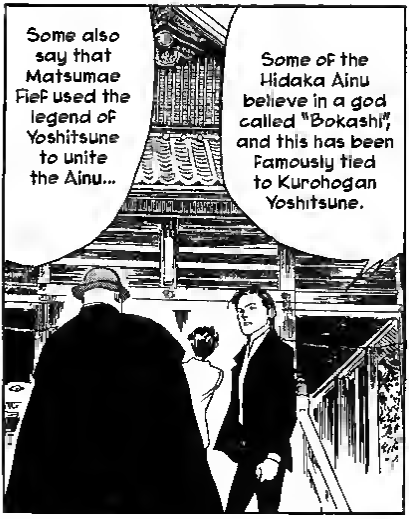


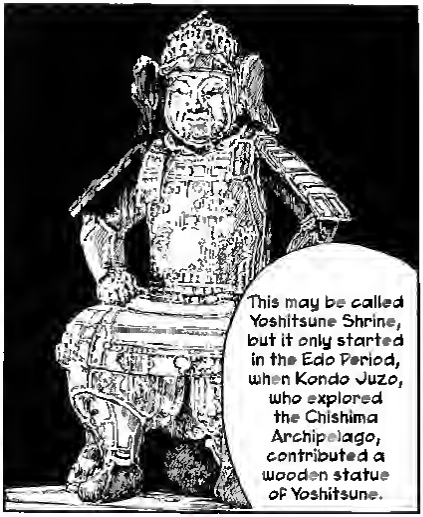
The only certain fact is that there was a band of samurai who crossed the Tsugaru Strait eight hundred years ago.

Some say that after the fall of Hiraizumi, the remnants of the Fujiwara Clan escaped and settled in the Ezo Land

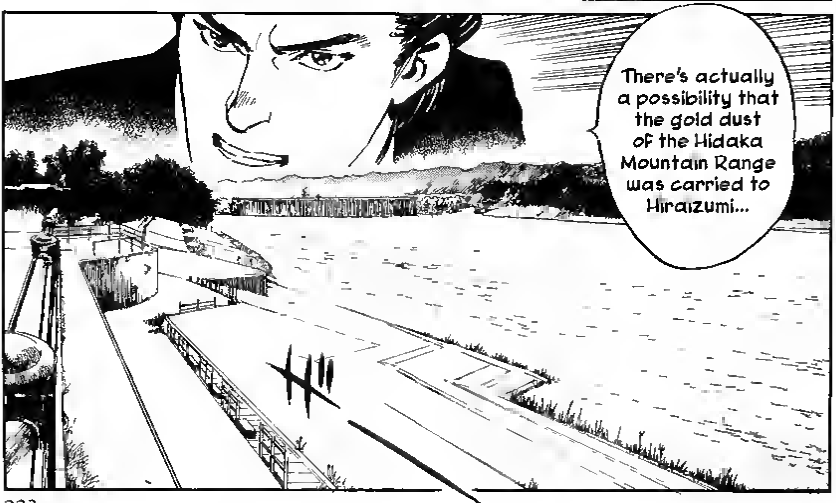

Kirau-Ushito-mi Kamui", the Horned Treasure God A mysterious ancient ritual object of the Ainu ...
The inlanders called it "Kuwasaki" but due to the resemblance to the "Kuwagata" samurai helmet crests, one theory says that they were made to approximate Yoshitsune's helmet
The Kuwagata crests changed their shape as time passed The "Long Kuwagata", which are most similar to the Kuwasaki, were in fashion from the late Heian Period to the Kamakura Period In other words, during Yoshitsune's time

Biratori, Saru District
Yoshitsune Shrine
Shoo, shoo...


Some also say that Matsumae Fief used the legend of Yoshitsune to unite the Ainu...
Some of the Hidaka Ainu believe in a god called "Bokashi", and this has been famously tied to Kurohogan Yoshitsune.


This may be called Yoshitsune Shrine, but it only started in the Edo Period, when Kondo Juzo, who explored the Chishima Archipelago, contributed a wooden statue of Yoshitsune.

By the way, the Saru River that flows into the Nibu Valley may be dammed up now, but it used to be rich with gold dust.

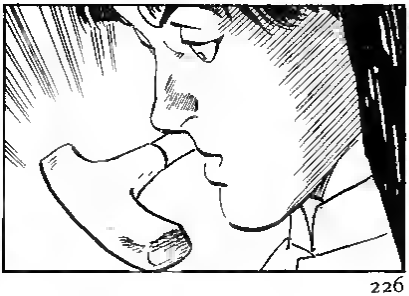

There's actually a possibility that the gold dust of the Hidaka Mountain Range was carried to Hiraizumi...

Some say that among the vast quantities of gold leaf used to build the Golden Hall, some was made from gold dust from Hidaka
To Hiraizumi!?
I see. Which would make it the one place in which Yoshitsune had connections...
This would mean that Biratori and Hiraizumi were connected somehow, whether by trade through the Emishi, or whether the Fujiwara Clan had an on-site office here.
Which would mean.
The Ezo Land was virtually nonexistent, according to central Japan. Naturally, most of its history is unknown.
Rustle

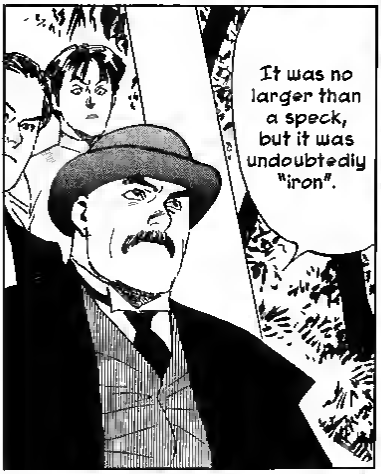
You mean there was a "king" of the Ezo Land!?
But slightly later in 1482, there are records in Korea that a messenger of the "King of Icheon" came to the courts of the King of Joseon to seek the Tripitaka (the Buddhist sutras).
Three hundred years before 1482 is 1182... That was just around the time of Yoshitsune!
Yes... The messenger said that their kingdom had known about the existence of Buddhism for three centuries, and had been gathering sutras.
We believe that Icheon refers to the Ezo Land.
And it was the Fujiwara Clan that occasionally sent messengers to China to import the sutras. . They are similar!

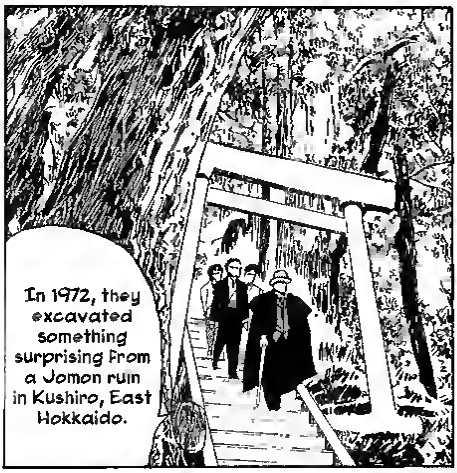
SO YOSHITSUNE SPREAD BUDDHISM THERE, AND HIS DESCENDANTS BECAME THE KINGS OF THE EZO LAND...!?

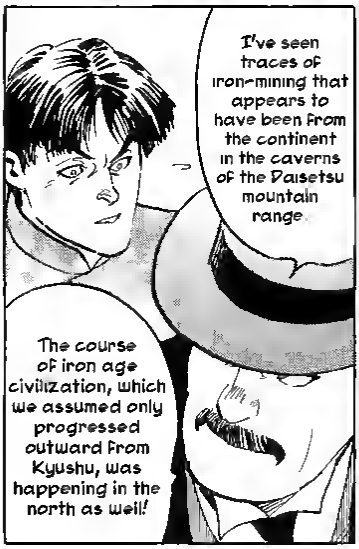
LONG TIME NO SEE, IMIBE. I'M GLAD TO SEE YOU WELL.
OW! THAT HURTS!

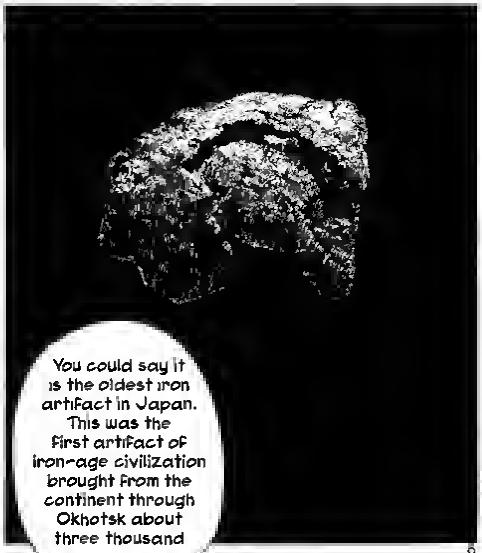


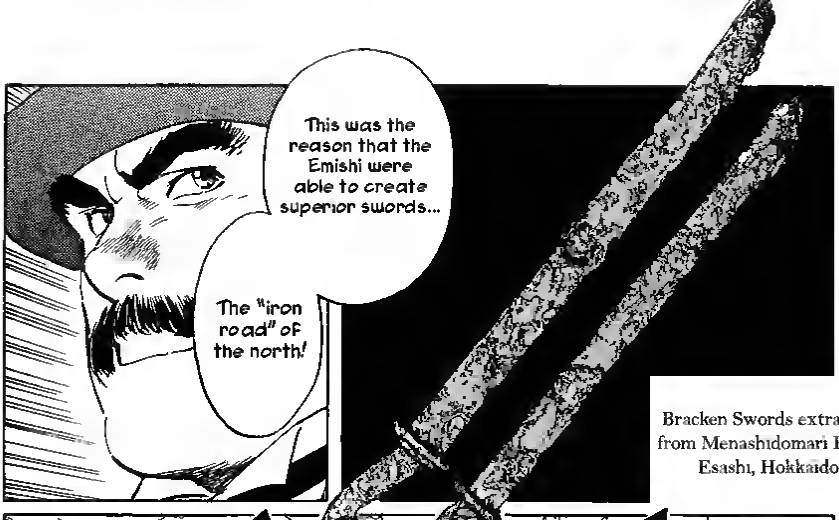
Y...YOU WERE THE ONE STOPPING AT ALL MY DESTINATIONS! YOU'RE SO GODDAMN IRRITATING! YOU'RE AN EYESORE!
Destinations?
I noticed there was a car following us from Tohoku. I didn't expect it would be you.
.....
I see. So you were pursuing the connection between swans and iron, too...
DON'T PLAY DUMB WITH ME! ONUMA IN HAKODATE AND UTONAI LAKE JUST NEAR HERE ARE FAMOUS MIGRATORY SITES OF SWANS! AND THEY'RE RICH IN IRON ORE AND IRON SANDS!
LIKE YOU THINK OF ANYTHING BESIDES THAT!
WHAT A DAMN JOKE! THE LEGEND OF YOSHITSUNE? HOW THE HELL ARE YOU GONNA TIE THAT TO IT!?


It was no larger than a speck, but it was undoubtedly "iron".

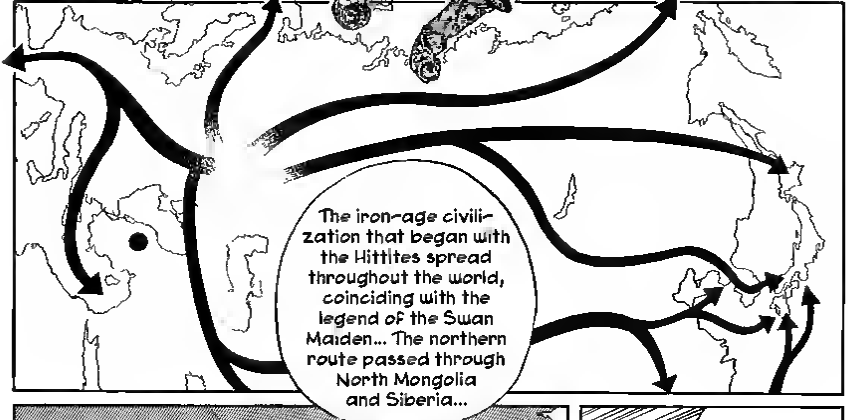

In 1972, they excavated something surprising from a Jomon ruin in Kushiro, East Hokkaido.

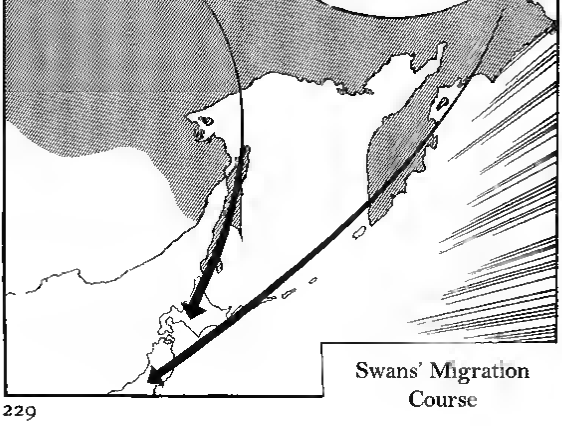

I've seen traces of iron-mining that appears to have been from the continent in the caverns of the Daisetsu mountain range.
The course of iron age civilization, which we assumed only progressed outward from Kyushu, was happening in the north as well!


You could say it is the oldest iron artifact in Japan. This was the first artifact of iron-age civilization brought from the continent through Okhotsk about three thousand years ago.

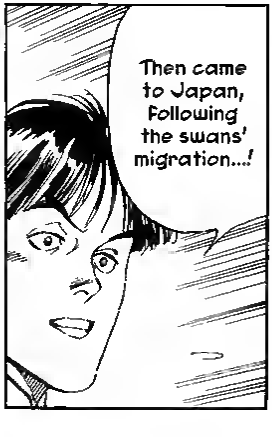


Bracken Swords extracted from Menashidomari Ruins Esashi, Hokkaido


The iron-age civilization that began with the Hittites spread throughout the world, coinciding with the legend of the Swan Maiden... The northern route passed through North Mongolia and Siberia...



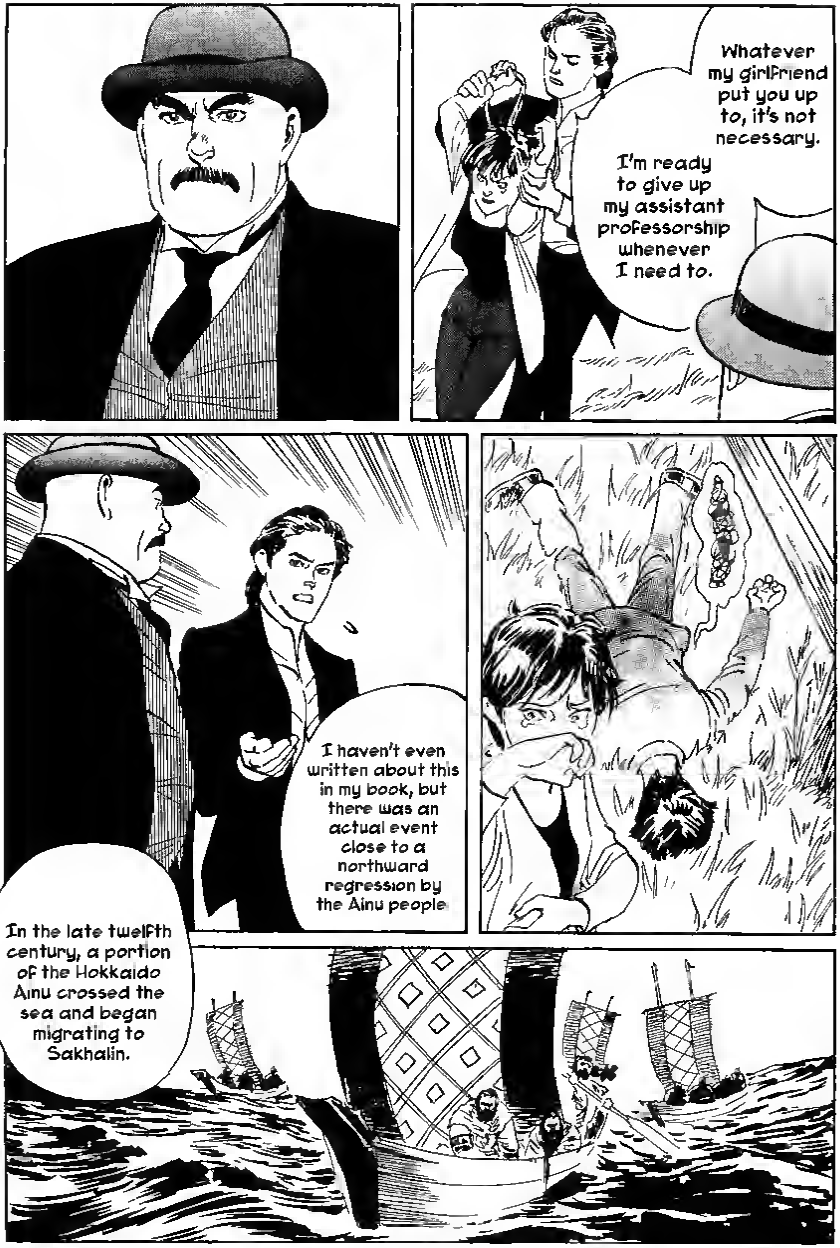
Swans' Migration Course

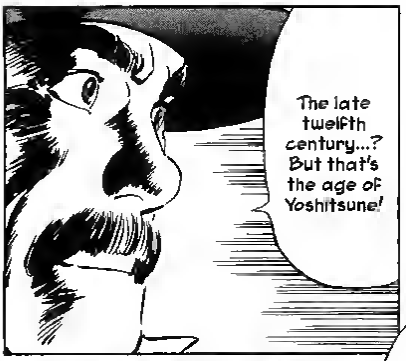


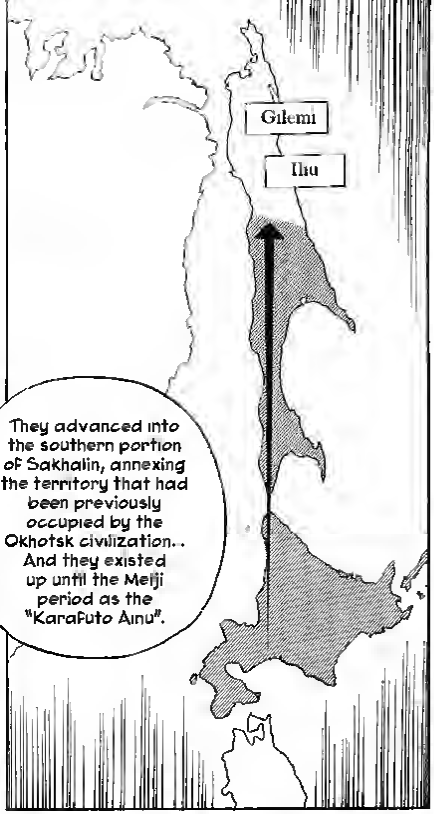
The Hakusan faith may be related to it. The color "white" itself became the sacred color.
Then the swan faith entered the Emishi with iron-age civilization, which is where we get the Swan Village, and Swan Shrine...
The world where the swans return to in the spring..
That is where there is a vast free land.
..But I think that when the pressure of the Imperial Court and the local clans became too intense, some among the Emishi began to regress to the north.
Regress to the north!?

So you're saying that Yoshitsune was travelling that route too, huh?
In search of a new world?
Haha!
Let me just say, you're through, Professor Munakata
Serves you right! Haaaa-hahaha!
You can't survive in the academic world if you take the stupid rumor that Yoshitsune survived seriously! You'll be shunned and exiled!
You mean like yourself?
That's what it is! Not even dogs would swallow it! At best, it's material for a TV station or a third-rate writer!
STUPID RUMOR!?

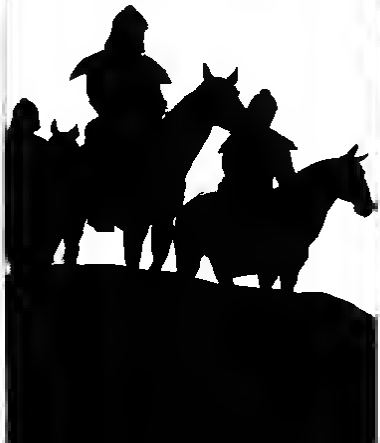
You're a bit better than him, but same goes for you, Rindo Tsunekiyo!
EXACTLY! YOU WON'T BE ABLE ACT LIKE EVERYONE'S AN IDIOT BUT YOU FOR MUCH LONGER! HOW'D YOU LIKE THAT?
W... WHAT THE HELL? CUT IT OUT WITH THE VIOLENCE!
AIIIEEEEEE!
I'LL CRUSH YOUR HEAD!
BUT I'M NOT A SNAKE!
I think you should leave, Professor Munakata.


Whatever my girlfriend put you up to, it's not necessary.
I'm ready to give up my assistant professorship whenever I need to.
I haven't even written about this in my book, but there was an actual event close to a northward regression by the Ainu people
In the late twelfth century, a portion of the Hokkaido Ainu crossed the sea and began migrating to Sakhalin.


The late twelfth century...? But that's the age of Yoshitsune!


Gilemi
Iliu
They advanced into the southern portion of Sakhalin, annexing the territory that had been previously occupied by the Okhotsk civilization.. And they existed up until the Meiji period as the "Karafuto Ainu".

The Mongol army seemed to have intervened in the battle between the Ainu and a north Sakhalin country called "Gilemi", most likely a Gilyak state, so it could hardly be called a Northern Mongol Invasion...



The only thing recorded is from the "History of Yuan", which says that in 1264, during the Mongol Invasion of Kyushu, the Mongol army that advanced to the Russian maritimes engaged in battle with the Sakhalin Ainu.

Who knows what kind of acts, unrecorded by Japanese history, the descendants of the Emishi committed in the northern world during those centuries?

This a famous tradition of the Ainu elders.
Followed a golden eagle...?
Yoshitsune followed a golden eagle to the land of Kurumuse...
Some say that Kurumuse refers to the Kuril Islands, but I think it was in North Sakhalin. The country of "Gilemi"... I can't help but feel that was Kurumuse!
Yoshitsune went north from the Ezo Land and went to Sakhalin...
That's what I'll write in my next book!

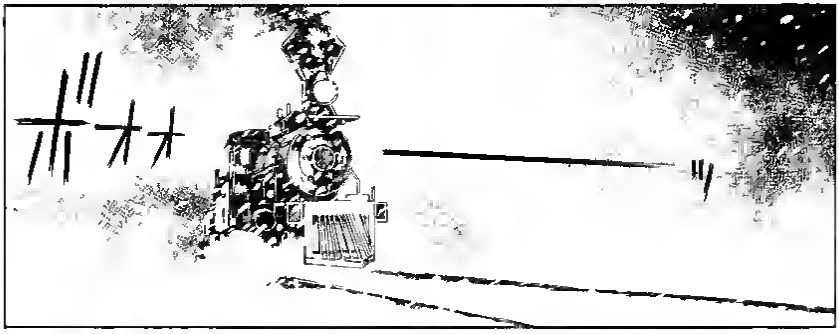
Ike, write down in your travel journal notes that I've come to the same conclusion as Rindo!
Alright, I'm sold on this theory!
But in return, if you'll let me have a word, Rindo...
Don't give up!
.....
If you still want to give up after a ten-year tenure as a professor, it won't be too late.
Stick your nose to the grindstone, keep on researching, and become a professor.

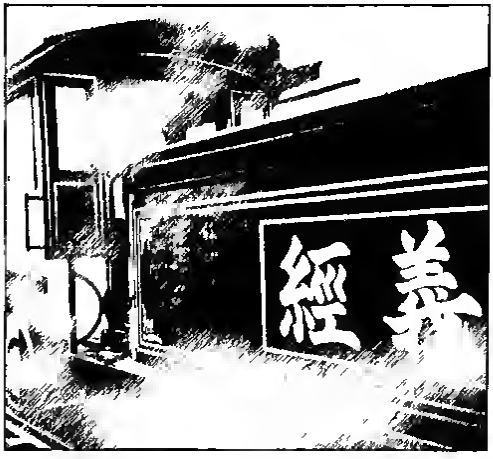
W... WAKKA-NAI!?
Isn't that where you were going next? Lake Kutcharo is a migratory spot for swans.
This is where we part ways. Now that I have a driver, I'm heading for Wakkanai.
I was planning on doing this all along. I thought I'd tackle my research theme a little more seriously...
Wait, Professor Munakata! What do you think you're doing?
Thank you... for everything.
Professor Muna-kata!

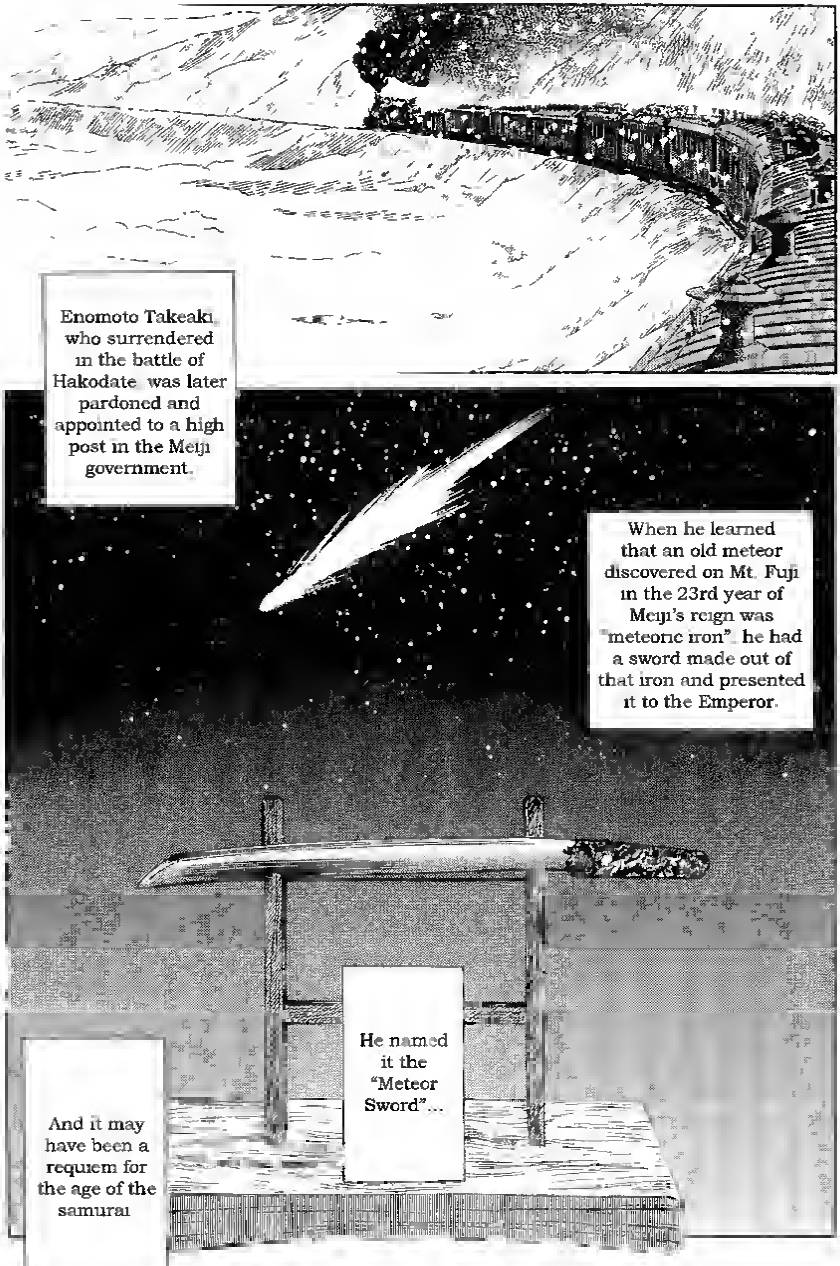
WHY THE HELL DOES IT HAVE TO BE LIKE THIS?
JUST TO BE CLEAR, I DON'T BELIEVE A LICK OF IT! IT'S ALL CONJECTURE WITH NO EVIDENCE!

But what if he chose to take the iron road, and travel all the way down it...
If Minamoto-no-Yoshitsune was such a man who would perish in Hiraizumi, then history would be right.

The Emishi's "iron road" from Hiraizumi to Sakhalin...
The road existed.

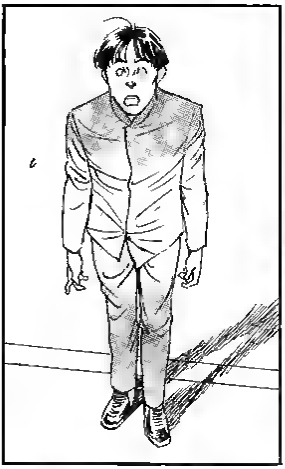

ポォォ

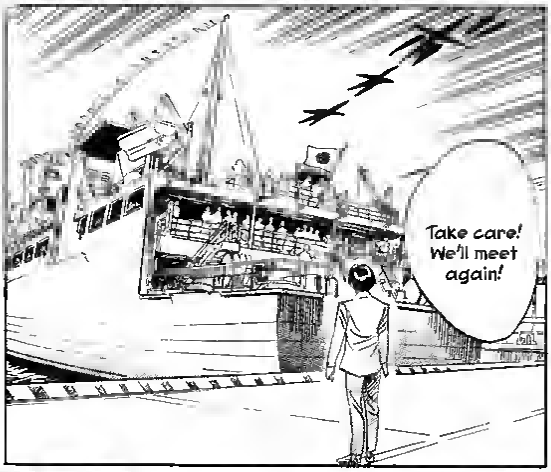

義経

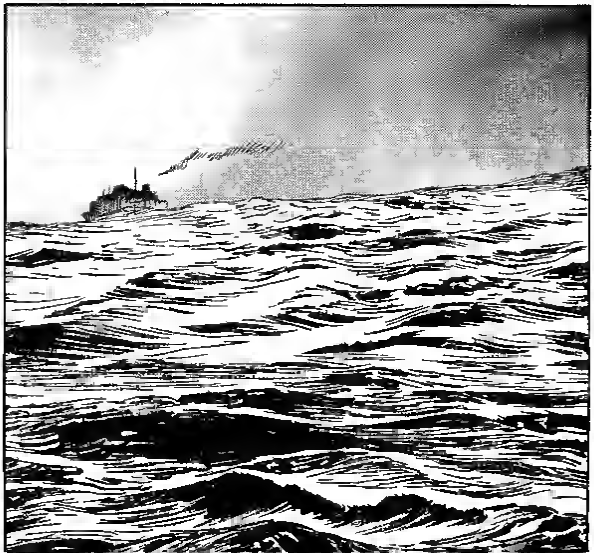

Enomoto Takeaki, who surrendered in the battle of Hakodate, was later pardoned and appointed to a high post in the Meiji government.
When he learned that an old meteor discovered on Mt. Fuji in the 23rd year of Meiji's reign was "meteoric iron", he had a sword made out of that iron and presented it to the Emperor.
He named it the "Meteor Sword"...
And it may have been a requiem for the age of the samurai

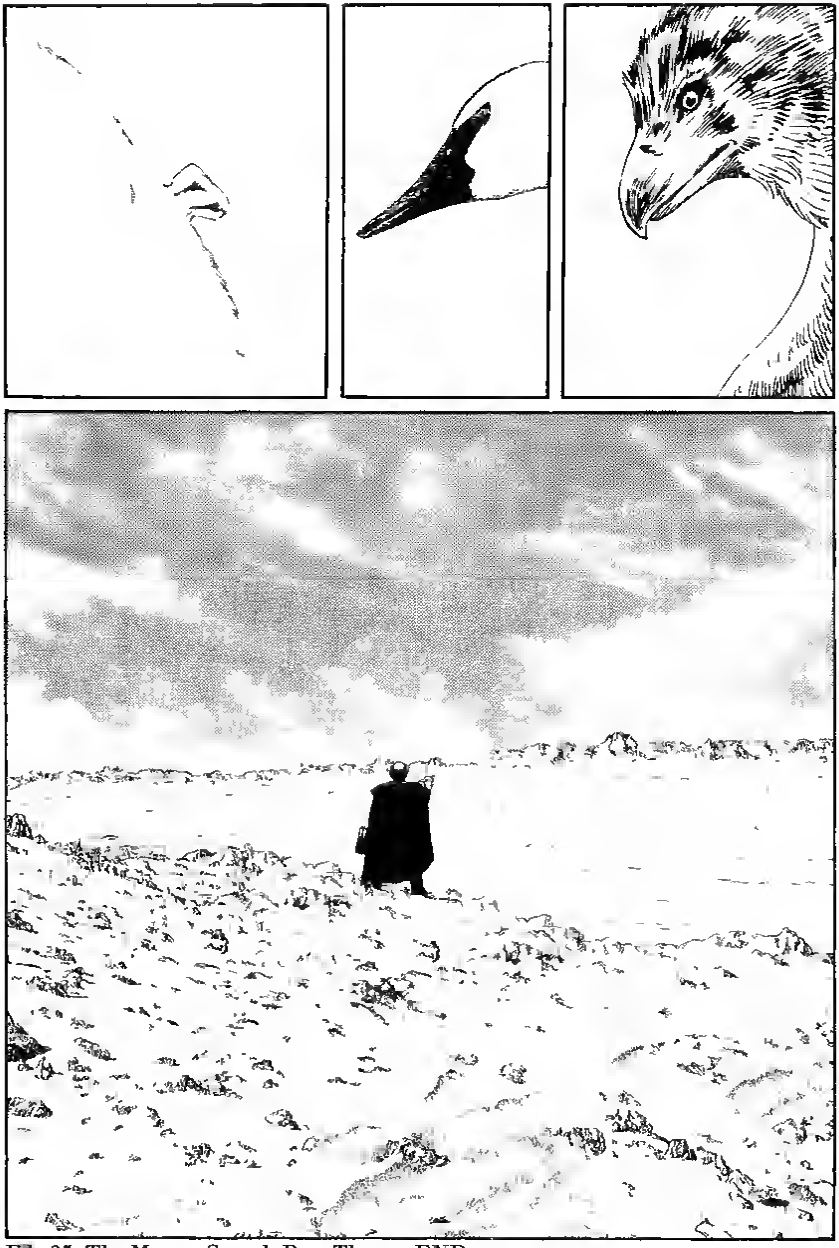
Wakkanai
Ferry for Sakhalin and Korsakoff
I plan on crossing the Tatarskii channel and riding the Siberian railroad, too.
I'm going to start by speaking to the Buryats of Lake Baikal, where I hear the swan faith thrived.
Y...YOU'RE GOING TO SAKHALIN!?
Oh, one more thing. "Tatar" is a word that refers to the Mongols, but did you know that it was the root of "Tatara"?
.....
According to one theory, the lineage of the Genghis Khan, a Mongol blacksmith who became a shaman and then a leader, were among them.

While the Biratori Ainu say that their ancestors were a goddess from Honshu and a wolf.
While I'm on the subject, they say that Genghis Khan's ancestors were a white doe and a blue wolf..




Take care! We'll meet again!





❖おことわり❖

この作品はフィクションです。
実在の人物・団体・事件などには一切関係ありません。
また、雑誌掲載時の時代を背景に描かれていますので、
現在の国名、単位表記と異なる表現がありますが、
あえてそのままとしました。ご了承ください。

❖初出単行本❖

一九九九年十月三十日　小社より刊行

解説

驚異的イマジネーションによる構想力

鎌田東二
京都造形芸術大学教授・宗教学

星野之宣の作品に接したのは『ヤマタイカ』が最初である。この漫画は宗教学や民俗学を研究し、国内外の聖地を巡礼しながらフィールドワークをつづけてきたわたしに強烈な刺戟を与えてくれた。

原始の火の国のちはやぶる神々の世界、沖縄久高島に伝わるイザイホーの秘儀、仏教の伝来とともに国家権力によって封印されていく土着の荒ぶる神々と聖域、その抵抗と叛乱と原初エネルギー世界の再発見と再発動。息つく暇もないスリリングでエキサイティングな展開に、わたしは夢中で『ヤマタイカ』を読み耽った。血沸き肉踊る体験だった。

その後、『宗像教授伝奇考』が連載され、単行本化されたものを何冊か読んだ。その単行本が文庫化される機会にこうして解説を頼まれたのも奇しき縁というほかない。

これらの作品を読みながら、わたしの考えや感覚は星野が描く主人公の考えや感覚にとても近いということを発見した。ということは、星野とわたしの考えや感覚に共通性があ

るということであろう。学問と漫画という携わる分野こそ違え、共通の関心と探究と仮説が生まれてくることに頼もしくも嬉しく思ったのは事実である。

さてこの『宗像教授伝奇考』の宗像教授である。この設定にはなかなか深い意味がある。宗像教授は「東亜文化大学」の「民俗学」教室の教授であるが、その研究分野と関心は広く、世界の神話・歴史・民俗に及び、日本民俗学という枠に収まることはない。その点で、スキンヘッドの魁偉な風貌といい、その学識と関心の深さ・広さ、推理と論証の大胆さといい、南方熊楠を髣髴とさせる魅力的なキャラクターだ。

第一集の冒頭に置かれた「白き翼　鉄の星」では、宗像教授のライフワークが白鳥伝説や羽衣伝説などの日本神話を世界神話の中で解明することにあると説明される。宗像教授は大学の講義中にこう語る。「はるかな場所から始まった伝説が日本にまで伝わる——世界の中の日本の伝説を考察することがわしのメインテーマでもある」と。まさにこれは、柳田民俗学の枠内には収まり切らない南方民俗学的地平である。実際、「ムナカタ・タダクスMUNAKATA　TADAKUSU」という名前は「ミナカタ・クマグスMINAKATA KUMAGUSU」という名前と酷似している。「宗像伝奇」という名前自体が民俗学的な言霊の表出ではないか。

宗像教授は、白鳥伝説や羽衣伝説の原型が数千年前の星の伝説であったことを突き止め、それが島根県の山中に伝わる七星剣に繋がっていることを解明してゆく。即ちプレ

アデスの星座伝説が鉄器文化の伝播と結びつき、鉄の産地に地磁気に反応する白鳥の生態が介在することで白鳥伝説が伝わっていったことを推論するのである。

この宗像教授の推論・仮説も興味深いが、そこに関わる人間ドラマも興味深い。実はこの七星剣の鑑定を頼んできたのが、宗像教授の民俗学のクラスで受講している女子学生の両親であるのだが、この学生の母親がある日突然島根県の山奥の白鳥沼に迷い込んできた、現代の羽衣伝説のような記憶喪失の女性だったのだ。宗像教授の七星剣の伝播の謎の解明につれて、迷い込んできた母親の過去が明らかになってきて、終にこの女性は過去の自分の記憶を思い出し、そして行方知れずとなる。古代の伝説と現代の人間の生き方やあり方を結びつけながら民俗学的人間ドラマを構築していく星野の手腕は、手馴れたストーリーテラー（語り部）のそれである。

この宗像教授は、実は宗像大社の摂社・海照火明神社（アマテルホアカリジンジャ）の神主の次男坊として生まれた。父親は兄弟のどちらかに神主を継がせようとしたが、宗像伝奇はさっさと東京の大学に進学して自分のやりたい研究に没頭し、結局兄が後を継ぐ羽目になった。宗像教授はそのことに負い目を感じているが、兄の突然の死によって久しぶりに故郷の島に帰る。そしてそこで兄の本当の死因を探り当てる。兄はタブーを犯して聖域・沖ノ島に埋蔵されていた装身具を研究のためと称して自宅に持ち帰ったので、古くから島内のことは言ってはならない、何一つ持ち出してはならないというしきたりを厳格に守ってきた島の八須という漁師

に殺害されたのである。

その4、5世紀の首飾りには、「天狗の爪」と称される約1億年前の中生代の鮫の歯の化石が使われているが、その地層には石油があった。宗像教授は兄の残した三つ石の地図を頼りに巨石を探り当て、洞内に古代人のミイラがあるのを発見し、その地層に石油が埋蔵されていたことを確認する。そして、「海照火明命」とは、この三つ石の巨石の下にある石油が燃えて天然の灯台になっていたことに由来する神格・神名であったと推理してゆく。さらには、宗像三女神とは、ローマのウェスタ神女のように、その神聖な三つ石の火を守りつづけてきた宗像の「斎き島姫」であったと結論する。

大変想像力にとんだ説であり、ストーリーテリングである。わたしはこの仮説を俄かには支持できないが、星野が緻密な探究と考証の果てに驚くべきイマジネーションを展開する構想力には目を開かされ、大いに刺戟される。このように、一つ一つの章が豊かな想像力と大胆な考証と仮説によって構成され、読み応えがあり、かつ考え応えがある。

ところで、本第六集には「氷の微笑」「桃太郎連説」「夢と知りせば」「流星剣」の四篇が収められている。最後の「流星剣」は前編・中編・後編に分載された中篇である。ここでは特に冒頭の「氷の微笑」を中心に考えてみたい。

「氷の微笑」は、青森県上北郡白森村の雪深い山中に住む老翁が物語る不思議な経験談が、年とともに変化してゆくさまを詩情豊かに抉った作品である。話の骨子は雪女伝説である

が、それは実体験に基づいたものとして語られる。ここでは、昭和5年、12年、21年、39年、現在の時系列が示される。昭和5年、老翁・与次平の幼少期、母親が労咳（肺結核）にかかり、療養所に隔離され、まもなく死んだことが暗示される。同12年、父親が吹雪の小屋の中で凍死する。激しい風が吹き荒ぶ。

戦後まもなくの昭和21年、やはり吹雪の夜に一人きりの家に女が訪ねてくる。見たこともない美しい女であった。しかし、青年時代の老翁は、誰か分からぬ者に殴られ、気絶している間に女は何処かへ消えていた。そのことを村の派出所の巡査に語っても、夢でも見たのだろうと取り合ってもらえない。ところが、ある吹雪の晩に、女が訪ねてくる。いくら勧めても囲炉裏に近づかず、熱い雑炊に箸も付けない。火の傍らに来て当るようにと、女の手を取って引っ張ると、その手は氷柱のように冷たかった。いつしか、囲炉裏端で眠っている間に、またしても女は何処かへ消えていた。朝になると布団は空っぽで冷たく濡れている。その女が雪女だったために、火の傍らにいて溶けてしまったのだという。

昭和39年、東亜文化大学民俗学専攻の学生・宗像伝奇は、教授の論文作成の手伝いで雪女伝説を集めるために東北を旅し、老翁の家に来てこの話を採話した。そして、それから35年経った平成11年、今は教授となっている宗像伝奇は再び老翁・与次平の家を訪ね、話を再確認する。すると話は、父と母と雪女の入り混じった話に変容していた。

――十和田の方で用事を済ませた与次平と父親は帰り道に地吹雪に遭った。やっとの思

いで炭焼き小屋に辿り着くが、疲れきった父親の消耗は激しかった。そこへ雪女がやってきて父親に息を吹きかけた。すると父は死んでいた。雪女は、このことを誰に言ってもいけない、本当のことをしゃべったら殺すと言い残して消えていった。次の年の吹雪の夜、長いこと会っていなかった母親が療養所から突然帰ってきた。独りぼっちの家庭に火が灯ったように温かな日々を暮らし、1年が過ぎた。ある夜、つい気の緩んだ与次平は、母に向かって、父親が死んだのはこのような吹雪の夜だったと洩らす。すると、とうとうしゃべったなと、母親はすごい形相に変容し、男を殺そうとするが、「お母」と呼ぶ声に阻まれて、いつしか姿を消した。そしてまた与次平は独り取り残された——。

宗像教授は、与次平の話がだんだん変っていくことに学問的な興味を抱き、それを確かめにくる。そして、村の派出所の古い記録も読んで「事実」を調べ直す。なぜ話が時とともに変っていくのか。宗像教授は、「いったい何が際限なく人を物語に駆りたてるのか」と問いかける。それはこの東北という風土のせいなのかと自問自答する。

そんな宗像に、与次平の妻の老婆は、実は昔与次平の家に来たのは自分であると告白する。一度嫁にいったが、かつての恋人のことが忘れられず駆け落ちした。しかし運悪く、山中で吹雪に出遭い、恋人は谷底に滑り落ち、凍え死にそうになった時に与次平の家に辿り着いた。しばしそこで休むが、しかし追っ手が来て、与次平は殴られ、女は連れ戻された。その後、2年ほどして離縁となった女はまたふらふらとこの村に戻り、寂しげな与次

平の家に押しかけ女房のように住み着いたと話したのである。

ここで、話は一件落着、話のつじつまが合ったと思った瞬間、その話をした老婆は突然発光して消え去り、与次平は囲炉裏端で眠るように死んでいた。そしていつしか、吹雪の雪が強くなってくる。

まさにこれ自体が伝奇的なストーリーではないか。どこからが本当で、どこからが作り話なのか、定かではない。そのような不確定性の中に民譚というものは投げ込まれていて、民衆の想像力の中で次々と変形しつづけ、生きつづけ、語り継がれてきたことが露わになる。

これを読むと、人間という存在が常に他者を求め、物語を話さないではいられない孤独と恋しさを秘めた存在であるというメッセージが伝わってくる。物語る情熱の不条理と不可解。物語の発生。そこに何があるのかという民俗哲学的な問い。

この宗像伝奇教授は、妻に死に別れて、現在独身であるが、学生時分に情熱を傾けて求愛していた女性がいた。「夢と知りせば」はその若き頃の宗像の恋物語が、今は死者となった女性との内的かつ霊的対話として描かれている。小野小町と重ね合わされるその女性は、12歳年下の宗像を心から愛していたが、その愛の強さゆえに宗像を独占し、やがて宗像が自分を必要としなくなる日が来るのを予感した。それでもなお宗像を追い求め、支配し、離そうとはしない愛執の鬼女となることを予見するがゆえに、宗像の前からある日突

然姿を消したという。この作品には、星野のロマンチシズムと抒情的美学が息づいていて哀感を誘う。

最後の中篇「流星剣」にも、大胆に神話にメスを入れる宗像教授の中に息づく神話的思考と神話への愛が熱く物語られていて、神話の国のマレビトのような宗像の漂白を切なく炙り出す。宗像教授は担当の女性編集者に頼まれて、彼女の婚約者の若手中世史研究家・竜胆経清助教授の学問的苦境を突破することに手を貸す。その過程で、宗像教授は源義経伝説のなかに騎馬民族文化と鉄文化の伝播を読みとり、それが白鳥伝説の分布と重なっていることに気づく。こうして第一集の「白き翼　鉄の星」と第六集「流星剣」は阿吽の呼応をなすのである。

かくして、星野の作品には論理と情熱と悲が分かちがたく絡み合っていて、読者をいつしかこの世の中の異界の「伝奇」に誘うのである。

時代と世代を越えて、
いつも新鮮な名作群!!

〈潮漫画文庫〉絶賛発売中!!

❖星野之宣❖

「ヤマタイカ」全5巻

❖横山光輝❖

「三国志」全30巻
「項羽と劉邦」全12巻
「水滸伝」全6巻

❖手塚治虫❖

「ブッダ」全12巻
「ルードウイッヒ・B」全2巻

❖諸星大二郎❖

「無面目・太公望伝」全1巻

❖いしいひさいち❖

「鏡の国の戦争」全1巻

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「ツタンカーメン」全3巻
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❖坂田靖子❖

「坂田靖子セレクション」全17巻

❖たがみよしひさ❖

「メタルハンターズD」全2巻

潮漫画文庫
宗像教授伝奇考【第六集】
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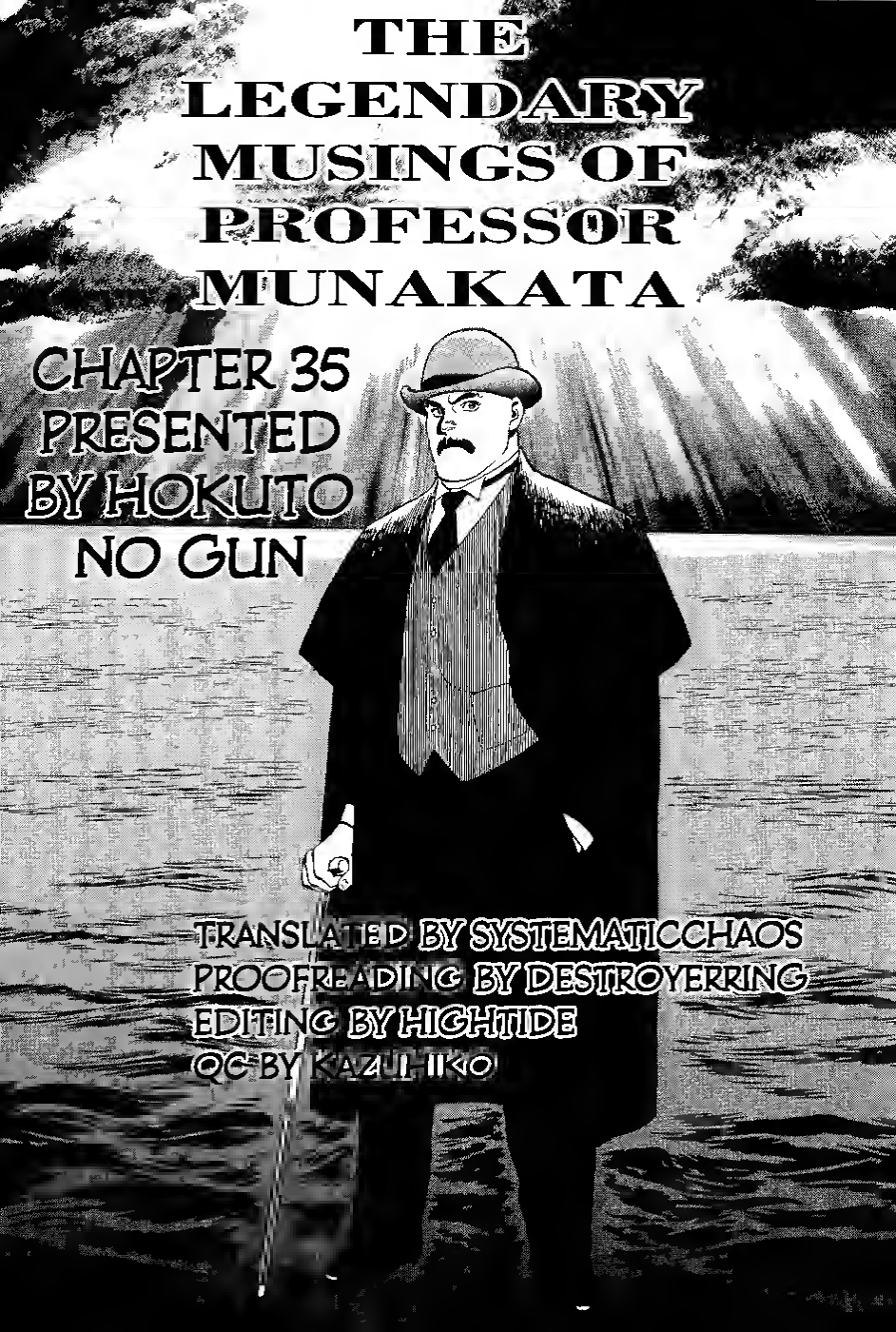
THE LEGENDARY MUSINGS OF PROFESSOR MUNAKATA

CHAPTER 35

PRESENTED BY HOKUTO NO GUN



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